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WATERLOO.

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THE strains of the *Marseillaise*, wafted one morning recently across St. James's Park from the guard-mounting at Buckingham Palace, struck one at first hearing as out of keeping with that tranquil monarchical environment; but time and circumstance have combined to purge Rouget de Lisle's verse and melody of all sinister association, and we approach the first centenary of Waterloo with a chastened resolve that nothing shall be spoken or written to ruffle the feelings of a faithful ally.

Nevertheless it would be affectation to pass June 18 next as an ordinary anniversary; for, despite the degree in which the forces engaged at Waterloo appear dwarfed and their armament ineffective in comparison with the armies now contesting the same old ground, no lapse of years may diminish, much less efface, the effect of that summer Sabbath's work upon the history of the nations. Moreover, however much or however little public celebration of the centenary may take place (the less the better!), the occasion is one for grave thought upon the danger of committing the destiny of a nation too confidently to the security of treaties, however solemn, or to *entente*, however cordial. For see what one hundred years have brought to pass! Of our two allies at Waterloo, the more powerful (with whom we had then perfect *entente*) has brutally outraged the weaker, in violation of a treaty devised to protect that weak ally for all time—an act of treachery on the part of one of the Great Powers which, a year ago, would have been pronounced 'unthinkable' by the wiseacres who coined and made current that preposterous phrase. That outrage the British army is now engaged in avenging under the chief command of a Marshal of France—France, a nation which the experience of centuries had brought our people (despite the Crimean interlude) to regard as

their hereditary enemy. May the *entente cordiale* never wane ! At the same time, let the frequent shift of partners be borne in mind when mawkish twaddle about the Channel Tunnel is resumed, as resumed it assuredly will be when Parliament has attention to spare for it.

More ink has been shed upon Waterloo than upon any other battle-field in the world, nor is it likely that any more lucid, graphic, and impartially dignified description of the action has been or will be given than that by M. Henry Houssaye in the third volume of his '*Histoire de la Chute du Premier Empire*.'¹ The purpose of this paper, therefore, is not to follow the events of June 18, 1815, in detail, but to touch upon certain points which have become controversial, or of which the importance has been underrated or their bearing on the victory misunderstood.

I.

The first of these points is highly controversial, namely—Was Wellington taken by surprise in the manner chosen by Napoleon to invade Belgium ? Wellington, who had been engaged at the Congress of Vienna since February 3, was apprised on March 7 of Napoleon's escape from Elba ; next day came the news that he had landed at Cannes with his personal staff and 1100 men. On the 12th Wellington wrote to Castlereagh—'It is my opinion that Buonaparte has acted upon false or no information, and that the King (Louis XVIII.) will destroy him without difficulty in a short time.' He recommended that the few Anglo-Hanoverian troops which were still in Belgium should, with the Belgian-Dutch army, be placed at the disposal of the French King, and he (Wellington) offered to take command of it. But so lightly did he estimate the chances of a rising for Napoleon—so greatly exaggerated was his reckoning of the popularity of the Bourbons—that he remained calmly at Vienna, and not until he arrived at Brussels on April 5 does he seem to have realised the full gravity of the crisis. The Prince of Orange handed over to him the command of 24,200 troops, whereof 4000 were British infantry, nearly all recruits or young soldiers. There were 7300 seasoned Hanoverians, 6000 King's German Legion, of which 2400 were cavalry, and 6900 Belgian-Dutch, whereof 1900 were cavalry. Most of these Netherlands had served under Napoleon, who, early in April, had summoned them to rejoin his eagles, but the Prince

¹ 1815: *Waterloo*. Paris: Perrin et Cie., 1899.

of Orange told the Duke that he might trust their officers. The only other force at hand for the defence of Belgium was Count Kleinst's army of 30,000 at Namur and Liége.

The Russian army was far off in Germany, moving up to guard the middle Rhine; 90,000 Austrians lay between Basle and Mannheim for the protection of that frontier, while 120,000 were engaged in Lombardy against Murat, and the Bavarian army of 80,000 held the Upper Rhine. It was vain, therefore, to expect support from such distant allies, and Wellington had to abandon his earnest desire to take the offensive by marching on Paris. Practically the whole of the royal army of France had declared for Napoleon, with whom had to be left the initiative in the coming campaign.

Reinforcements at length began to arrive from England, Hanover, &c., until by the beginning of June Wellington had at his disposal an army composed thus:

British	31,253
King's German Legion	6,387
Hanoverians	15,935
Dutch-Belgians	29,214
Brunswickers	6,808
Nassau Contingent	2,880
Engineers, Staff Corps, &c.	1,240
	<hr/>
	93,717 effectives. ¹

The various arms were in the following proportion:

Infantry	69,829
Cavalry	14,482
Artillery	8,166, guns 196
Engineers, &c.	1,240
	<hr/>
	93,717

By this time Prince Blücher had fixed his headquarters at Namur, commanding an army of

Infantry	99,715
Cavalry	11,879
Artillery	9,360, guns 312
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	120,954

distributed in four corps guarding the frontier of Belgium from Liége on the east to Charleroi on the south. The right of Zieten's Corps at Charleroi touched the left of Wellington's 1st Corps under

¹ The exact numbers are variously estimated by different authorities; but all are in approximate agreement.

the Prince of Orange at Genappe. That Corps occupied a line of positions as far as Enghien, whence the line was continued by the 2nd Corps of the Allies under Lord Hill through Ath to Audenarde on the Scheldt. Owing to the small proportion of British troops in his command, Wellington had organised his force in two corps only ; but the 5th and 6th Divisions were kept in Brussels, and supplied garrisons to Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, Ypres, and Mons—names which have been so constantly in our thoughts and on our lips since August last.

Now has to be faced the question whether Napoleon, by his masterly concentration upon the Sambre, succeeded in taking Wellington by surprise—a proposition indignantly repudiated by those who can admit no shortcoming in the General ‘who never lost a gun.’

It may be convenient to give a succinct time-table of the Hundred Days :

March	1,	1815.	Napoleon escapes from Elba and lands at Cannes with 1100 men.
„	20,	„	He arrives at Fontainebleau ; Louis XVIII. leaves Paris.
„	25,	„	Treaty of alliance between Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain ; the last-named granting a subsidy of £5,000,000 to be divided by Wellington among the other three Powers.
April	5,	„	Wellington takes over command of the British and Netherlands army.
„	9,	„	Napoleon recalls furlough men and deserters to the army : 75,898 reported themselves.
„	10,	„	He mobilises the National Guard ; 150,000 reported themselves.
May	18,	„	He calls upon retired soldiers to rejoin ; 25,000 reported themselves.
June	4,	„	He decrees conscription ; 46,419 reported themselves.
„	12,	„	He leaves Paris for the Belgian frontier.
„	14,	„	He takes command of the army of invasion at Beaumont.
„	15,	„	The French army cross the frontier and capture Charleroi.
„	16,	„	Napoleon defeats Blücher at Ligny. Wellington defeats Ney at Quatre-Bras.

June 17, 1815, Napoleon detaches Grouchy to pursue Blücher ;
advances against Wellington, who retreats
to Waterloo.

„ 18, „ Battle of Waterloo.

As there were no telegraphs, wireless or otherwise, and no air-craft one hundred years ago, Wellington had to rely for information of the enemy's movements upon intelligence gathered by scouts and spies on the frontier and conveyed by despatch-riders to his headquarters at Brussels—a matter of six or eight hours, if all went well.

There were three routes, and three only, by which Napoleon could invade Belgium : namely, by the paved roads passing through Charleroi, through Mons, and through Tournay. The Charleroi road was not fortified ; but the other two roads led past the defensive works at Mons, Tournay, and Ath. Had Napoleon chosen either of these two roads, he must either have reduced or masked the fortresses on them. To reduce them would have consumed time, which he could not afford ; to mask them would have dangerously reduced his numbers, already far inferior to the combined forces of Wellington and Blücher.¹ So, while he ordered a concentration at Maubeuge, he skilfully disguised his real purpose by posting detachments of troops along the whole west frontier of Belgium, withdrawing them secretly in succession, and replacing them with National Guards. Not till June 13 was the trick discovered, when Sir Hussey Vivian, reconnoitring the frontier at Tournay, found that place occupied, not by combatant troops, but by a few *douaniers*. On the previous day, the 12th, General Dörnberg, stationed at Mons, had reported to headquarters that 100,000 French were concentrated between Avesnes and Philippeville. Now Dörnberg's report must have reached the Duke not later than the morning of the 13th, and Vivian's on the morning of the 14th, on which day Napoleon was actually present with 64,000 troops at Beaumont, only sixteen miles south-west of Charleroi, while Gérard's corps of 16,000, forming the right wing of the French army, had pushed as far east as Philippeville. Nevertheless, to the very latest moment Wellington continued to regard the enemy's movements on the Sambre as no more than a feint, being

¹ The strength of Napoleon's army at Charleroi was :

Infantry	89,415
Cavalry	23,595
Artillery	11,578 with 344 guns.
	124,588

The Anglo-Dutch and Prussian armies amounted together to 214,671, on a very wide front.

firmly of opinion that the real attack would be made by way of Mons. So late as 1838 he declared to Lady Salisbury that, by all the rules of strategy, the Emperor ought to have taken that route.

Notwithstanding the disadvantage of an improvised staff, Napoleon must have been far better served by scouts and spies than Wellington was; for he had been accurately informed of the point of junction between the Anglo-Belgian and Prussian armies, and directed his attack so as to drive a wedge between the two. At 4 A.M. on Thursday, June 15, Napoleon's advanced guard crossed the frontier and engaged the Prussian post at Thuin, on the Sambre. By 11 A.M. the French were in possession of Charleroi, and before nightfall the whole army, 124,000 strong, were in bivouac between Thuin, Charleroi, and Gosselies.

In amazing contrast to the vigour and purpose of these movements on the frontier were the simultaneous proceedings at Wellington's headquarters, only thirty-three miles to the north. We have the authority of the Prussian General Müffling, who was attached to Wellington's staff and in constant communication with him throughout the 15th, that the officer despatched by von Zieten immediately the attack upon Thuin developed did not arrive in Brussels till 3 P.M.—thirty-three miles in eleven hours! In the vivid pages of *Vanity Fair* Thackeray has made English readers familiar with the aspect of the Belgian capital—every hotel and boarding-house crammed with officers and with fashionable non-combatants of both sexes. I think the chief source whence he derived material for these stirring chapters must have been the narrative of a young Scotswoman, Miss Charlotte Waldie, who, with her sister, arrived in Brussels from Ghent on the morning of June 15, and described her experience in letters to a friend at home. These letters were handed to John Murray for publication anonymously, while the writer was still on the Continent, and without her knowledge.¹ Miss Waldie tells her story so clearly and simply that she must be accounted invaluable as a non-combatant eye-witness. She and her sister were lucky in having secured rooms *au troisième* in the Hôtel de Flandre.

'At first we passed through some mean, dirty streets, but the appearance of the town soon improved. The houses are large, ancient,

¹ The little book has passed through three editions, each under a different title—viz. *Narrative of a Residence in Belgium during the Campaign of 1815* (1817): *The Days of Battle, or Quatre-Bras and Waterloo* (1853): and *Waterloo Day* (1888).

and highly ornamented. . . . What a transition from the dark, narrow, gloomy streets of the low town to the lightness, gaiety, and beauty of the Parc, crowded with officers in every variety of military uniform, with elegant women and with lively parties and gay groups of British and Belgic people—loitering, walking, talking, and sitting under the trees. There could not be a more animated—a more holiday scene; everything looked gay and festive, and everything spoke of hope, confidence, and busy expectation. . . .

‘We had not entered the hotel many minutes, and had not once sat down, when we recognised our pleasant *compagnon de voyage*, Major Wylie, standing in the Place Royale below, encompassed with officers. He saw us, took off his hat, and, breaking from the people that surrounded him, darted into the door of the hotel, and was with us in a minute. Breathless with haste, he could scarcely articulate that hostilities had commenced! . . . At first we could scarcely believe him to be in earnest. “Upon my honour,” exclaimed Major Wylie, and scarcely able to speak from the haste with which he had flown up the hundred steps, “it is quite true; and the troops are ordered to be in readiness to march at a moment’s notice, and we shall probably leave Brussels to-morrow morning.” In answer to our eager inquiries he then told us that this unexpected intelligence had only just arrived; that he had that moment left the Duke of Wellington’s table, where he had been dining with a party of officers, and that, just as the dessert had been set upon the table, a courier had arrived bringing despatches from Marshal Blücher, announcing that he had been attacked by the French.’

One is tempted to quote at even greater length from this lady’s lively narrative, but enough has been given to show how completely the General Staff were taken by surprise. Major Wylie, of the Royal Fusiliers, who was extra aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, went on to inform Miss Waldie that “when the express came away they [the French and Prussians] were fighting as hard as ever in the neighbourhood of Charleroi; but, after all, it may prove a mere trifling affair of outposts—nothing at all. Nothing certainly is known of the force of the French.” And so saying, Major Wylie went away to dress for a ball.

Is it possible to acquit Wellington of *insouciance* (one hesitates to apply the plain English ‘carelessness’ to so great a commander) in allowing all his principal officers to go among the fiddles and champagne after he knew that the enemy was over the frontier? The Prince of Orange, commanding the 1st Corps; Lord Hill, commanding the 2nd Corps (there were but two corps in the allied army); Lord Uxbridge, commanding the Cavalry Division, and the

other Generals of Divisions and Brigades, all were allowed to leave juniors in charge of their commands on the frontier. Permission had even been given to the Duchess of Richmond to engage some sergeants and privates of the Black Watch and Gordon Highlanders as exponents of the art of dancing reels for the edification of her foreign guests!

When von Zieten's despatch reached Wellington's hands at about 3 P.M., Müffling asked him where he would have his army concentrated. The Duke, although quite without information as to what had happened during the eleven hours since that despatch was sent out, maintained his opinion that the demonstration near Charleroi was no more than a feint, and refused to make any fresh dispositions until intelligence came from Mons—the direction whence he still expected the real offensive; but he gave orders to General Picton to have the reserve divisions in Brussels ready to march at a moment's notice. Two hours later, about 5 P.M., he issued orders for the army to concentrate upon Nivelles, which lies about twelve miles N.N.W. of Charleroi and about seven miles west of Quatre-Bras; *but he did not send the divisional and brigadier generals back to their commands.* He instructed the generals of division not to comply with the 5 P.M. orders to move on Nivelles 'until it is certain that the enemy's attack is upon the right of the Prussian army and the left of the British army.'¹ A few more precious hours went by before he realised how gravely the defence of Brussels had been compromised by Napoleon's movement on the southern frontier. At 10 P.M. he wrote to the Duc de Feltre informing him that the Prussian posts at Thuin had been attacked, but that he had no news from Charleroi later than 9 A.M. (two hours before it was taken by the enemy). Lastly, says Müffling, the Duke called upon him a little before midnight and said 'I have a report from General Dörnberg at Mons that Napoleon has moved on Charleroi with all his force, and that he, General Dörnberg, has nothing in his front. I have therefore sent orders for the concentration of my people at Nivelles and Quatre-Bras.'

The statement about Quatre-Bras is not in accord with fact, for there is no mention of Quatre-Bras in these after-orders. That place became so prominent in the events of the following day that Müffling probably associated it inadvertently with the Duke's instructions. It is clear from the following statement by Sir Hussey Vivian, commanding a Light Cavalry Brigade, that Quatre-Bras was an afterthought.

¹ *Despatches*, xii. 473.

'On the 15th I went to Brussels and dined with Lord Anglesey. After dinner Sir Pulteney Malcolm came to us from the Duke, where he had dined, and said that the French had advanced, and I think he said had taken Charleroi. At night we all went to the Duchess of Richmond's ball. It was only during the ball that the Duke called several of those who commanded divisions or brigades together, and told us to be prepared to move in the morning; and it was during the night only that orders were issued for the actual march of the British troops from the right towards Nivelles, and it was on the march that we received orders to continue our march on Quatre-Bras.'¹

The original intention to concentrate, not on Quatre-Bras, but on Nivelles, should be borne in mind in view of what was going on at Quatre-Bras on the evening of June 15, to which the reader's particular attention will be requested presently. Meanwhile, let us endeavour to unravel the remarkable situation at the British headquarters.

General Müffling records that, after Wellington had informed him at midnight of the purport of General Dörnberg's despatch from Mons, he said 'My troops are about to march; but Napoleon's friends here are beginning to look up. We must reassure our friends; so let us go to the Duchess of Richmond's ball, and we will mount at five o'clock in the morning.' It is as certain as anything can be at this distance of time that when the Duke went to the ball he did not know that Charleroi had fallen. It was in the ball-room that the Prince of Orange brought him first word of it; upon which he secretly instructed his general officers to go away quietly, so as not to create alarm, and about 2 A.M. the reserve divisions were marched off under General Picton, with orders to halt at Waterloo. The Duke himself remained for supper, at which he returned thanks for the toast of the allied army proposed by the Spanish General Alava. Toasts and speeches! with the whole French army across the frontier and within thirty miles of the supper-room! Listen to Lady Dalrymple-Hamilton's note of the leisurely way war was conducted one hundred years ago:

'I sat next the Duke on a sofa a long time, but his mind seemed quite preoccupied; and although he spoke to me in the kindest manner possible, yet frequently in the middle of a sentence he stopped abruptly, and called to some officer, giving him directions,

¹ *Waterloo Letters*, p. 151. Vivian's brigade was at Enghien, twenty-two miles from the ball-room and twenty-five from Quatre-Bras. It arrived at Quatre-Bras too late to take any part in the action on the 16th.

in particular to the Duke of Brunswick and the Prince of Orange, who both left the ball before supper. Despatches were constantly coming in to the Duke. . . . However, we remained till half-past two, and when I left the Duke was still there. . . . At four o'clock in the morning I went to the window (it was the finest morning possible). I saw the Highland Brigade marching out to the tune of "Hieland Laddie" . . . a number of British regiments followed, then foreign troops, and at eight o'clock the Duke of Wellington and his staff passed.'

It is in a letter from Captain—afterwards General Sir George—Bowles that Wellington is represented as explicitly admitting to the Duke of Richmond that Napoleon had taken him by surprise. The letter is to the first Earl of Malmesbury :

'The Prince of Orange came back suddenly,¹ just as the Duke of Wellington had taken his place at the supper-table, and whispered some minutes to his Grace, who only said he had no fresh orders to give, and recommended the Prince to go back to his quarters and go to bed. The Duke of Wellington remained nearly twenty minutes after this, and then said to the Duke of Richmond "I think it is time for me to go to bed likewise," and then, whilst wishing him good-night, whispered to ask him if he had a good map in the house. The Duke of Richmond said he had, and took him into his dressing-room, which opened into the supper-room. The Duke of Wellington shut the door and said : "Napoleon has *humbugged* me, by G— ! He has gained twenty-four hours' march on me." The Duke of Richmond said "What do you intend doing ?" The Duke of Wellington replied "I have ordered the army to concentrate on Quatre-Bras ; but we shall not stop him there, and if so I must fight him *here*" (at the same time passing his thumb-nail over the position at Waterloo). He then said adieu, and left the house by another way out. He went to his quarters, slept six hours and breakfasted, and rode at speed to Quatre-Bras. . . . The conversation in the Duke of Richmond's dressing-room was repeated to me two minutes after it occurred by the Duke of Richmond, who was to have commanded the reserve, if formed, and to whom I was to have been aide-de-camp. He marked the Duke of Wellington's thumb-nail with his pencil on the map, and we often looked at it together some months afterwards.'

Here, again, one cannot help suspecting that Quatre-Bras has crept into Bowles's recollection of this incident through association with the battle fought at that place a few hours later. If Wellington

¹ He had received word from Constant de Rebecque, Assistant Quartermaster-General of the 1st Corps, that the French had appeared before Quatre-Bras.

issued any orders on the 15th later than the after-orders at 10 P.M. they were lost when Colonel De Lancey, Quartermaster-General, was killed. Picton was ordered to halt his reserve column at Waterloo, where the roads to Nivelles and Quatre-Bras diverge, indicating that when Wellington issued that order he had not made up his mind at which point the concentration should take place.

That he did not decide upon Quatre-Bras until he had ridden as far as Genappe, within four miles of Quatre-Bras, appears clear from the tenor of the following orders issued on the 16th—the day after the battle :

To General Lord Hill, G.C.B.

‘ June 16, 1815.

‘ 1. The Duke of Wellington requests that you will move the 2nd Division of Infantry upon Braine-le-Comte immediately. The cavalry has been ordered likewise on Braine-le-Comte. His Grace is going to Waterloo.’¹

To the Same.

‘ June 16, 1815.

‘ 2. Your Lordship is requested to order Prince Frederick of Orange to move, immediately upon receipt of this order, the 1st Division of the Army of the Low Countries, and the Indian brigade, from Sottenghem to Enghien,² leaving 500 men, as before directed, at Audenarde.’

To Major-General Sir J. Lambert, K.C.B.

‘ June 16, 1815.

‘ 3. The brigade of infantry under the command of Major-General Sir J. Lambert to march from Assche at daybreak to-morrow morning, the 17th, to Genappe, on the Namur road, and to remain there until further orders.’

To General Lord Hill, G.C.B.

‘ Genappe, June 16, 1815.

‘ 4. The 2nd Division of Infantry to move to-morrow morning at daybreak from Nivelles to Quatre-Bras. The 4th Division of Infantry to move at daybreak to-morrow morning to Nivelles.’

To the Same.

‘ June 16, 1815.

‘ 5. The reserve artillery to move at daybreak to-morrow morning, the 17th, to Quatre-Bras, where it will receive further orders.’

By ‘ daybreak to-morrow morning ’ the battles of Ligny and

¹ Braine-le-Comte is about twenty miles west of Quatre-Bras.

² Enghien is about twenty-six miles west of Quatre-Bras.

Quatre-Bras had been lost and won, and Wellington had issued orders for the retreat of his army.

The plain truth is that disastrous consequences of Wellington's miscalculation and dilatory concentration were averted only through corresponding dilatoriness on the part of Napoleon and Ney on the 16th. It was this, and this alone, which enabled the belated concentration of the allied army at Quatre-Bras to be so far completed as to be in time to receive the attack which was not delivered till 3 P.M. It was the first time that Wellington and Napoleon met in battle, and each of them began the encounter by a false move.

II.

There was, however, a subsidiary cause which contributed in a very important degree to avert the consequences of Wellington's tardiness in concentration; and this brings us to review the part borne in the campaign by the Belgian-Dutch contingent—a part which has been commonly under-estimated, owing, I fear, in large measure to that thrilling 32nd chapter of *Vanity Fair*, but also to the charges of misbehaviour made by Alison and Siborne against the Netherlander troops, until it became currently believed that Waterloo was won, not by the help of Belgian-Dutch officers and men, but in spite of them.

The left of Wellington's line was in touch, as aforesaid, with the Prussian right at Genappe, the troops there being the 2nd Brigade of the Belgian General de Perponcher's division, commanded by Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar. In the absence of the Prince of Orange at Brussels on the afternoon of June 15, his *Chef-d'état major*, the Dutch Baron Constant de Rebecque, was left responsible for carrying out any orders for the movement of troops that might arrive. If he had followed the instructions for a divisional concentration upon Nivelles, the direct road from Charleroi to Brussels would have been laid open to the invading army. In view of what was going on in his front at Charleroi, de Rebecque took upon himself to disregard those instructions. It is uncertain whether Prince Bernhard was acting upon his own initiative, or upon General de Perponcher's orders, or upon Rebecque's; anyhow, Prince Bernhard moved his brigade four miles forward from Genappe and occupied Quatre-Bras.

Now see the effect of this disobedience upon the course of events.

Maréchal Ney, it will be remembered, having been sent from Paris declaring that he 'would bring back the usurper in an iron

cage' to King Louis, had immediately deserted to Napoleon, who, however, kept him in disgrace till the last moment, sending for him on June 11. Ney reported himself at Charleroi on the 15th, and was given command of the 1st and 2nd Corps d'Armée with orders 'to drive the enemy along the road to Brussels and take up a position at Quatre-Bras.' That evening it was announced in the *Bulletin de l'Armée* that 'The Emperor has given command of the left wing to the Prince de Moskowa (Ney), who has fixed his headquarters at Quatre-Bras, on the road to Brussels.' When Ney's advanced guard arrived before Quatre-Bras about 6 P.M. on that evening, he found the place occupied by a force the strength of which he had no means of ascertaining. It consisted, had he known it, of only four battalions of infantry and a battery of horse artillery, not enough to offer effective resistance had he firmly persevered. But Ney had only taken over his command that morning; many of his officers were unknown to him, and his men had been under arms since dawn. After exchanging a few rounds of light artillery, he fell back and bivouacked. Thus the wedge whereby it was Napoleon's intention to thrust apart the British and the Prussian armies was withdrawn.

Before midnight de Rebecque received fresh instructions from headquarters to move de Perponcher's division to Nivelles. But de Perponcher had received an urgent request from Prince Bernhard for reinforcement, declaring that without support he could not hold Quatre-Bras, as his brigade had only ten rounds of ammunition. Again de Rebecque disobeyed orders. He either directed or allowed de Perponcher to march off Van Bylandt's Netherlander Brigade to reinforce Prince Bernhard's Nassau Brigade in Quatre-Bras. At the same time he ordered up Van Merlen's brigade of Netherlander Light Cavalry from Saint Symphorien-aux-Bergen, nearly forty miles distant, to be ready for what the morrow might bring forth.

The morrow, indeed, did not bring forth what it should have done for the French, owing to Ney's culpable inaction. He had at his disposal 39,500 infantry, 3500 cavalry, and 64 guns; opposed to him de Perponcher had no more than 8000 Belgian and Nassau troops; but, as Napoleon truly said, 'Ney n'était plus le même homme.' He had allowed his column to bivouac in line of march instead of in line of battle, and at 10 A.M. on the 16th his brigades were still spread as far to the rear as Thuin, sixteen miles away. He delayed his attack upon the position of Quatre-Bras till 2 P.M., by which hour Wellington and his staff had come on the scene. Van Merlen's brigade—the 6th Dutch Hussars and the 5th Belgian

Dragoons—arrived at Quatre-Bras about the same time as Picton's column of eight British and four Hanoverian battalions—namely, about 3 P.M. It may well be understood that the Netherlander cavalry were not in best trim for fighting after their forty-mile march; nevertheless they formed line immediately and kept the enemy engaged while Picton's troops were deploying. It is true that Van Merlen was overpowered by Piré's splendid Lancers, losing 225 killed and 146 wounded out of his strength of 1100; it is true, also, that his men behaved badly after the encounter, many of them galloping back to Brussels, spreading news of defeat and disaster. It is true, moreover, that most of de Perponcher's people, who had behaved so steadily overnight and in the early part of the battle, quitted the field in disorder before the end of it. But let them have credit for what they did, these Nassau and Netherlander troops. They held the position of Quatre-Bras in the face of a greatly superior force, until the British brigades arrived in succession from Brussels and the cantonments on the west, and they kept the enemy engaged until Wellington had formed his line of battle. De Rebecque's courage in taking the initiative and disobeying orders saved the allied line from being forced at its weakest point—the high road from Charleroi to Brussels. If that had taken place, Ney would have been free next day either to operate with 44,000 men upon the flank of the Prussians at Ligny, or to have dealt in detail with Wellington's troops as they came up in succession. Is there not some parallel between this dislocation of Napoleon's offensive by Belgian boldness and that of the German Emperor's offensive in August 1914, owing to the gallant stand made by the Belgian General Leman at Liège?

Let me now skip the remaining events of June 16 and the retreat to Waterloo on the 17th, and inquire into the behaviour of the Netherlander contingent in the great action of the 18th.

Wellington's line at Waterloo was formed just over the northern or reverse slope of the ridge of Mont-Saint-Jean, with advanced posts at Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. But there was a third detachment left on the southern or exposed face of the ridge. Bylandt's Netherlander Brigade—the same that had been sent to reinforce Prince Bernhard at Quatre-Bras on the night of the 15th—was stationed in the open to the east of the Charleroi road, which bisects the field of battle. One hundred or one hundred and fifty yards to their rear, Pack's Highland Brigade was drawn up behind the crest of the ridge, protected by the hedges along the cross-road

to Ohain. Napoleon placed a battery of eighty guns immediately opposite Bylandt's position. This Netherlander Brigade assuredly ought to have been withdrawn before the guns opened. It was serving no purpose whatever in that position ; but it seemed that its plight was overlooked ; nobody knew how it came to be there.

'The brigade of Netherlanders,' wrote Sir William Gomm, Picton's Assistant Quartermaster-General, 'were certainly in line before the French columns advanced, and considerably down the slope, so that Rogers's [British] guns fired over them. . . . These Netherlanders were undoubtedly much exposed—eighty pieces of cannon opening upon them at horse-pistol range or little more. *I did not place them there.*'¹

The Netherlanders stood their ground manfully during the half-hour's terrific cannonade which prepared the way for the attack by d'Erlon's four infantry divisions. Their formation was shattered, and when the massive columns of Donzelot and Allix came upon them they did what the steadiest infantry in the world must have done—they broke and ran up the slope, passing through the ranks of the Cameron Highlanders lying behind the hedges. The Highlanders jeered at them and prodded them with bayonets ; but this sorely tried brigade, most of it at least, rallied in rear of Pack's line and remained on the field till the close.²

The Netherlander cavalry on the whole did fine service at Waterloo ; but their renown has been obscured by the dastardly conduct of the Duke of Cumberland's Hussars, a showily-dressed corps of Netherlander volunteers. These fine gentlemen, having refused to take up a position at Wellington's order, took to their heels. One writer after another has given prominence to their disgraceful behaviour, while failing to do justice to the other regiments. The Netherlander cavalry engaged at Waterloo lost 628 killed and 634 wounded. Among those killed was that good soldier Van Merlen, whose brigade had played such a timely part two days before at Quatre-Bras.

As to the other Netherlander regiments at Waterloo, their reputation has been compromised by confusion with the misbehaviour of a Nassau battalion in the wood and copse (now no more) at Hougoumont. The performance of that corps was as bad as could

¹ *Waterloo Letters*, p. 31.

² One regiment of this brigade, the 7th Belgian, having lost 100 men at Quatre-Bras, mustered 534 effectives on the morning of the 18th. Their casualties on that day were 236 killed and wounded.

be, but they were Germans, not Belgians—one of the regiments that deserted from Soult and joined the British army on the Nive in 1813. The fact that this regiment was in the Belgian General de Perponcher's division at Quatre Bras has given rise to the mistaken idea that they were Netherlanders.

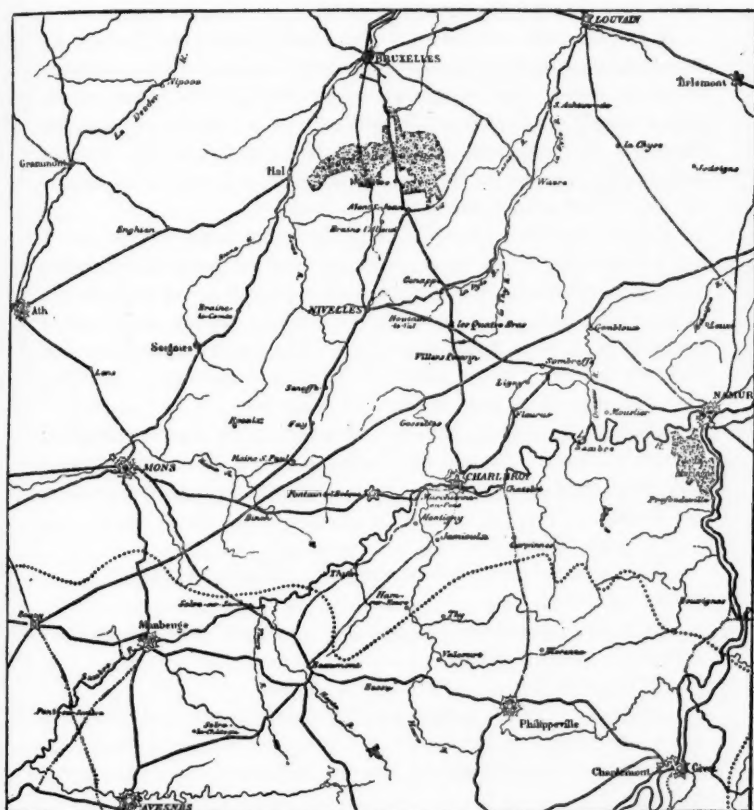
There is more truth in the unfavourable reports of Baron de Chassé's division of Netherlanders. Chassé himself had served in Napoleon's army in the Peninsula, where he was known as *le Général Baionnette*. His division, formed of Ditmer's and d'Aubremé's brigades and Van der Smissen's battery, was brought in about 2 P.M. from Braine-l'Alleud, far on the extreme right of the line, to support Lord Hill. D'Aubremé's brigade was drawn up in support of Maitland's brigade of Guards, Ditmer's in support of Kiemanssegge's Brunswicker battalions, which were on the left of Colin Halkett's brigade. That, so far as can be gathered from admittedly conflicting accounts, probably was the position in this part of the line when the French Imperial Guard delivered their last attack in the evening. The Brunswickers seem to have recoiled before that assault, throwing the 30th and 73rd British regiments on their right into some confusion. The line, in short, was broken when Chassé moved up Ditmer's brigade, with Van der Smissen's guns, and charged the French column,¹ enabling the shaken regiments to regain their formation. It has to be admitted, however, that D'Aubremé's brigade did not behave admirably. Part of it bolted from the field, although two battalions stood their ground and bivouacked that night at La Belle Alliance.

To conclude :—considering that the total strength of Wellington's army present at Waterloo was only 67,661, of which 17,784 were Netherlander troops, the behaviour of the latter cannot, on the whole, have been unsatisfactory, else it would have been impossible to hold the position of Mont-Saint-Jean through a long summer day.

¹ It has been denied with heat that Ditmer's brigade bore any part in the repulse of the Imperial Guard; but we have Lord Hill's authority for according them that honour. 'In the report,' he wrote to General de Chassé, 'that I had the honour to make to His Excellency the Duke of Wellington, I made special mention of the conduct of your division during that day, and I did not omit to mention that it advanced to repulse the attack of the French Imperial Guard. Unfortunately, the report of His Excellency the Duke of Wellington was already sent to London before the arrival of my own report. Nevertheless, I am well assured that His Excellency is well informed of the fine conduct of the troops under your orders on that glorious day.'



GROUND COVERED IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1815.



'THE IRON DUKE.'

The scene is below the ramparts and inside the grounds of Walmer Castle, and the time the autumn of 1834.

A sloping path, covered with dead leaves, leads down through the trees to an open space, and, near by, a large beech tree with a noticeable hole in the trunk. On the right are the ramparts, facing the sea, and on them a couple of old thirty-two-pounders. It is a brilliantly fine late autumnal afternoon, and the slowly sinking sun throws long shadows through the trees, and on RUDGE, the gardener, as he wheels his barrow in, half full of dead leaves, under the beech.

RUDGE (*stretches himself*). Aie! aie! my back, my back! I don't know but 'tisin't harder work being a gardener than fighting they damned French! There be such a martel lot of dead leaves about. (*Takes his broom and goes back up the sloping path to sweep up the leaves.*) I do think there be more leaves fall now in autumn than when I wor a boy. Most as many as I see dead men lying about in that there farm orchard at Waterloo.

(*And as he sweeps, DUNCAN MURRAY peers over the ramparts between the guns. He is a diminutive Eton boy of ten, and wears a tall hat, short black jacket, and trousers strapped down over his boots.*)

DUNCAN. Rudge!

RUDGE (*stops sweeping and sees him*). What, back again? You young varmint!

DUNCAN. Look here, Rudge; I'll just show you the way my father got inside Badajoz.

RUDGE. Ah?

DUNCAN. He just cocked one leg over the rampart, drew the other one after him, gave a bit of a jump—and there he was! (*as he climbs over the rampart and sits laughing on one of the thirty-two-pounders.*)

RUDGE (*drily*). Yes, that's uncommon like it. But, look here, have you got the 'baccy?

DUNCAN. The 'baccy? (*With feigned alarm.*) There!—

RUDGE (*threateningly*). Then I won't have you here, interrupting!—

DUNCAN (*laughs*). All right, old boy. (*Runs down to him.*) There's the 'baccy.

RUDGE. Thank 'ee. (*Chuckles as he puts broom against the barrow to light his pipe.*) You're a fine young chap.

DUNCAN. Ain't I? And do you know what these are? (*Shows him long wooden matches wrapped in paper.*)

RUDGE (*as he fills his pipe*). Can't say as I do.

DUNCAN. They're some of the new matches.

RUDGE. No; be they?

DUNCAN. Look here; you just scrape 'em along the paper—so!—and off they go—fizz! (*Holds up lighted match.*)

RUDGE (*admiringly*). Lord a'mighty! Where's the world going to stop?—Hold hard, young 'un! hold hard! (*Lights pipe.*)

DUNCAN. That's rather nobby, eh? That's better than your old flint and steel.

RUDGE. Oh, the flint's all right; what sort o' use would them new-fangled things be in a gale o' wind? (*He sits on the barrow smoking, while DUNCAN goes to the beech tree and looks in the hole.*) No, no, give me the old flint and steel. Where should we 'a been in Spain, with Sir Arthur, if we 'adn't 'ad the old flint and steel?

DUNCAN. Rudge!

RUDGE. Well, what now?

DUNCAN (*as he puts his hand in the hole and brings out a large toad*). Rudge! He's asleep again.

RUDGE (*grunts*). Them sort of wild beasts don't do much else.—Now, don't you bring him near me! A nasty toad!

DUNCAN (*offended*). Nasty toad? He's a beautiful toad; he's the finest toad that ever stepped.

RUDGE. Toads don't step; they 'ops!

DUNCAN. And what's to become of the poor dear when I go back to Eton to-morrow, I'm sure I don't know.

RUDGE. What's to become of 'im? Why, same as what become of 'im before you broke into the Dook's grounds, I s'pose, and took such a martel fancy—

DUNCAN. Yes, but don't you see, Rudge, ever since I found him, three weeks ago, I've taken such care of him, and fed him so regularly, I'm afraid he's lost the habit of looking after himself. (*As he goes back to tree and replaces the toad.*)

RUDGE. Well, let him find the 'abit again; and if he don't, he'll die.

DUNCAN (*indignantly*). Die? You're a very unfeeling man, Rudge. And with all that tobacco, too!

RUDGE. Oh, 'baccy's one thing, and toads is another. (*Leaves*

barrow and goes for his broom.) And I must get on with my work. Now then, be off with you.

DUNCAN. Oh, not just yet, Rudge. It's my very last visit, you know.

RUDGE. Visit, d'you call it? Clambering in over the ramparts, and kicking the leaves about, and making a pet of a poisonous toad? (*Raises broom threateningly.*) Be off with you, you young varmint.!

DUNCAN (*faces him defiantly*). No, I'm hanged if I do! And if you dare touch me, I'll write to the Duke of Wellington and have you shot dead!

RUDGE (*drops broom, grunts, and resumes sweeping*). You're a high-spirited sort of a boy, you are.

DUNCAN (*laughs*). So was my father before me. Do you know, Rudge, he says he remembers you in Spain.

RUDGE. Does he, now!

DUNCAN. Yes, and he says you were the bravest man in the whole British army.

RUDGE (*phlegmatically*). Then he tells a lie. The bravest man was Sergeant Macdonald. The Dook said so, and the Dook knows.

DUNCAN. Well, the second bravest then.

RUDGE. That's as may be.

DUNCAN. Then why are you so afraid of a toad? Why can't you look after him for me, while I'm at Eton? He won't hurt you.

RUDGE (*angrily*). Look after him? A nasty, poisonous, spitting reptile! I wouldn't look after him for all the gold in the Indies! Now, look here, if you don't go, I'll go straight up to the Castle and tell Sir Arthur.

DUNCAN (*laughs*). Sir Arthur! I suppose you mean the Duke?

RUDGE. Well, Sir Arthur, or the Dook, or old Hookey-nose; what's it matter? Any way, if you don't be off, I'll go and tell him.

DUNCAN. Pooh! He isn't here.

RUDGE. Yes, he is; he druv down from London last night.

DUNCAN (*excitedly*). Nonsense!

RUDGE. Nonsense? Look there; up there, through the trees. Don't you see the flag?

DUNCAN. Why, so it is. Then he's really here, at last! Oh, how I should like to see him!

RUDGE (*grunts*). Yes, you just let him catch you.

DUNCAN. He wouldn't mind. Why, we're fellow Etonians. (*Looking off through the trees.*) Rudge! Rudge! I do believe he's coming!

RUDGE. The Dook?

DUNCAN. I can see something white. Doesn't he wear white trousers?

RUDGE. Mostly. When it's fine.

DUNCAN. Then it must be he!

RUDGE (*startled*). Lord 'a mercy! Be off with you.

DUNCAN. Not I! I wouldn't miss such a chance for the world. You may, if you like.

RUDGE (*grimly*). No, the old 73rd don't run; but they sometimes beats a masterly retreat (*as he wheels away his barrow*). Young varmint! You get out of it the best way you can. And don't you go and get me into trouble. Mind you that!

(*He disappears as DUNCAN remains, peering off through the trees.*)

DUNCAN. Yes, it really is the old boy at last! I'll just hide and watch him go past. He'll never know, and I don't believe he'd mind, if he did. (*He hides behind the beech tree as the DUKE OF WELLINGTON saunters down the sloping path, followed by MR. ARBUTHNOT, his most intimate friend, known to the world as 'GOSH.'* The DUKE wears a single-breasted, black frock coat, tightly strapped white jean trousers, and a tall hat with a very straight brim.)

DUKE. Fact is, Arbuthnot, poor Spencer's death comes at a very awkward time.

ARBUTHNOT. But surely?—The Whigs must have someone they can depend on?

DUKE (*sharply*). Who? Althorp goes up to the Lords, where they're already in a minority. The difficulty is, who's to lead the Commons?

ARBUTHNOT. Spring Rice, Abercromby; or, better still, Lord John.

DUKE. John Russell? No, the King don't like him well enough. Too much of the Radical about little Johnny to suit His Majesty.

ARBUTHNOT. I believe His Majesty's beginning to think they're all too Radical.

DUKE (*grimly*). Shouldn't wonder! Especially after that display between Brougham and Durham at Glasgow. Brougham don't so much matter—we all know he's half mad!—but, begad the Chancellor seems to have bitten half the Cabinet. No

I told Melbourne what it would be, last week, when Spencer was so ill.

ARBUTHNOT. What did he say ?

DUKE. Oh, you know his happy-go-lucky way. He damned and swore, and said he'd just give 'em a shuffle and they'd be all right. But they won't. They'll never be able to get on without Althorp. Althorp's no genius, we all know that—including Althorp!—but he manages the Commons better than any man since Pitt.

ARBUTHNOT. Why can't Melbourne take in some of our side, if he's in a difficulty ?

DUKE. How are we going to pull with those fellows ? They're all mad on reform still. (*Scornfully*). Their latest game is Church Reform ; that'll lose them Spring Rice and Lansdowne. No, their one chance now is some sort of combination among themselves ! Only I don't believe the Radicals would join. They hate the Whigs ; they think they've deserted their principles. Principles ! I wouldn't give a tuppenny damn for a Radical's principles !—No, I tell you what, Arbuthnot, if His Majesty were a clever man he'd let them go on till Parliament meets, and then take the opportunity, which would soon present itself, of breaking them up.

ARBUTHNOT. And as His Majesty is not a clever man ?—

DUKE. Why, he'll probably point-blank dismiss them.

ARBUTHNOT. And send for you.

DUKE (*grunts*). And I shall have to find Peel, who's somewhere picture-hunting in Italy. God knows how we shall do. I've no small talk, and Peel has no manners !

(*Whereupon DUNCAN MURRAY, behind the tree, laughs.*)

ARBUTHNOT. Did your Grace laugh ?

DUKE. No, I didn't.

ARBUTHNOT. Somebody laughed.

DUKE. I didn't hear them ; I'm growing so blazing deaf. Just see. (*As ARBUTHNOT moves towards the tree, DUNCAN steps boldly out and takes off his hat.*)

DUNCAN. Please, sir—it was me.

DUKE (*grimly*). Oh, please, sir, it was you, was it ? And who may you be ?

DUNCAN. Please, sir, my name's Duncan Murray.

DUKE. Suppose you come a little nearer, youngster, and speak up.—Now then ; what are you doing here ? Put your hat on.

DUNCAN (*puts on his hat*). Yes, sir.

DUKE. Don't you know you're trespassing? Where do you come from?

DUNCAN. Please, sir, we're all stopping at Deal.

DUKE. Well, why don't you stop at Deal then, instead of hiding behind my trees? What do you want?

DUNCAN. Please, sir, I wanted to see you.

DUKE (*grunts*). But why aren't you at school? The schools have all gone back a month.

DUNCAN. Please, sir, my little brother's had the measles.

DUKE. Oh! Well, suppose you go back to your father and give him my compliments—Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington's compliments—and tell him in future he's not to let his son go wandering off into other people's grounds. Run away with you.

DUNCAN. Yes, sir. (*Runs up towards the ramparts.*)

DUKE. Oh, that's your route, is it? Take care how you go.

DUNCAN. Rather! (*As he puts his leg over the rampart, he takes off his hat and waves it.*) 'Floreat Etona'!

DUKE (*amused*). Ah! So you're an Eton boy?

DUNCAN. Rather! So are you.

DUKE. Oh, you know that, do you?

DUNCAN. Why, we all know that! And you'd two brothers there.

DUKE. But perhaps you don't know one of them went to Harrow first; only they sent him away for throwing stones at the headmaster.

DUNCAN (*delighted*). What a lark!

DUKE (*stoutly*). Not at all! Quite right. You must have discipline.—Here, come down here, young shaver. (*As DUNCAN comes down off the rampart to him.*) Tell me, whose house are you in?

DUNCAN. Please, sir, Drury's.

DUKE. That's new since my time. Whereabouts is it?

DUNCAN. Why, it was your old house.

DUKE. What? Racquenau's?

DUNCAN. Yes.

DUKE (*to ARBUTHNOT*). Why, I took Douro and Charles there, in '15, to show them my name cut in the panelling. (*To DUNCAN.*) Is it there still?

DUNCAN. Of course! *Wesley minimus*. That's you, isn't it?

DUKE (*drily*). That was me then, in '84. (*Confidentially.*) I say—tell me—have you had a mill yet?

DUNCAN. I've had a small affair; not a big set to, like yours.

DUKE (*chuckles*). Oh, you know about mine?

DUNCAN. Wasn't it with a man named Smith?

DUKE. It was. Bobus Smith. (*To ARBUTHNOT.*) Sydney's brother.

DUNCAN. But I don't know why you fought. What was it all about?

DUKE. Well, you see, Bobus was bathing, and I must needs stand on the bank and shy clods at him.

DUNCAN. Ah!

DUKE. 'Don't you do that, young Wesley,' said Bobus, 'or I'll give you a hiding.'

DUNCAN. What cheek!

DUKE (*gravely*). So of course I threw some more.

DUNCAN (*delighted*). Of course! And then?

DUKE. He came out of the water and put on his pants, and we fought in Brocas meadow there, and I beat him. That was my first and last fight.

DUNCAN (*laughs*). Oh, come!

DUKE. I don't count the others. I didn't have to use my mauleys.—Tell me, youngster, what's your father?

DUNCAN. He's a retired officer.

DUKE. Oh? What's his name?

DUNCAN. Same as mine. Duncan Murray.

DUKE. Duncan Murray? Wasn't he with me in the Peninsula?

DUNCAN. Rather!

DUKE. He was in poor Picton's division. The 32nd, surely?

DUNCAN. Yes, he was.

DUKE. I remember him very well. He was a very good officer.

DUNCAN. He's an uncommonly good father!

DUKE. Good officers mostly make good fathers. I hope he's pretty well.

DUNCAN. Well, he complains at times.

DUKE (*suspiciously*). What about?

DUNCAN (*hesitatingly*). Well, he thinks he ought to have a medal.

DUKE. What medal? Hasn't he got the Waterloo medal? What's he want more?

DUNCAN. He thinks he ought to have a medal for the Peninsula as well.

DUKE (*irritably*). Oh, the Peninsula! Let me tell you, Duncan, in confidence, there were a good many cocktails with me in the Peninsula. Are they all to have medals?

DUNCAN. Well, I daresay there were cocktails at Waterloo, weren't there?

DUKE (*grimly*). Devilish few! or we shouldn't have won.—Besides, what's a man want a medal for at all? He only does his duty.

DUNCAN. I suppose it's to let other people know he's done it?

DUKE. Stuff! The consciousness of having done it should be enough. So long as a man does his duty, he shouldn't care a tinker's curse what other people think. That's been my guiding principle through life, Duncan, and I recommend it to you.

DUNCAN. I'll tell my father.

DUKE. Aye, do! Tell him not to bother his head about medals. And tell him I remember him very well. Why, I remember his marrying your mother.

DUNCAN. No!

DUKE. Why, you know, Arbuthnot, what an amazing number of applications I used to get in Spain for officers to go home on private affairs.

ARBUTHNOT. Yes, I remember.

DUKE (*laughs*). Never any other explanation; always urgent private affairs. Now, when your father sent in his application, Duncan, he very wisely said nothing about private affairs. I expect he guessed I shouldn't let him off.

DUNCAN. What did he say?

DUKE. He just said he wanted to go home to be married. Hullo, said I, here's a man who really knows what he wants; we'll let this man go.—And that was your father, and the young lady was your mother. (*Gravely.*) I trust Mrs. Murray's well?

DUNCAN. Yes, sir, thank you.

DUKE. I saw her once.

DUNCAN. Did you? She's never told me.

DUKE. Yes, when I was at Cambrai, with the army of occupation, after Waterloo. Major Murray brought her to see me. I fancy it was to thank me. She was a very pretty woman.

DUNCAN. Mother's a very pretty woman still.

DUKE. Ah, well! that was in '18, just before I came home,

finally. (*Looking hard at the boy.*) And she is a pretty woman still, is she? (*After a pause.*) Well, run along with you, Duncan, and take care how you get over the rampart. Here, I'll give you a hand. It's pretty steep; a regular *glacis*, begad! (*Looking over the rampart.*) But I say, young shaver! you've been here before; several times. Why, you've worn a regular series of steps. Just you come and look, Arbuthnot. (*ARBUTHNOT goes to the rampart and looks over, while the DUKE takes DUNCAN by the ear and brings him down towards the beech tree.*) Now, sir, what's the meaning of this?—Mind you, no fibs!

DUNCAN (*proudly*). I never tell fibs.

DUKE. You've been in and out of my grounds ever since you've been at Deal, I can see. Why?

DUNCAN. You won't be angry?

DUKE. Not if you tell the truth.

DUNCAN. Oh, I'll tell the truth fast enough.

DUKE (*grimly, drops his ear*). Fire away, then!

DUNCAN. Look here, you see this beech.

DUKE. Well?

DUNCAN (*going to the tree*). And you see there's a hole in it.

DUKE. Well? What of it?

DUNCAN (*laughs*). Hey, presto! I put my hand in the hole, and what do I produce? (*He brings out the toad.*) Look!

DUKE (*gravely*). Wait a minute, youngster; I must get my glasses. (*Carefully puts on gold-rimmed spectacles.*) Why, God bless my soul, it's a toad!

DUNCAN (*laughs*). Right you are! It's a toad and no mistake.

DUKE. Is that your toad, or my toad?

DUNCAN. I fancy it's yours, since it's in your tree.

DUKE (*gravely, puts away his spectacles*). Well, I make you a present of it. I suppose you found it.

DUNCAN. Right you are again! The first time I came here—to try to see *you*—I happened to look in that hole, and there I saw *him*.

DUKE (*grimly*). What a disappointment!

DUNCAN (*innocently*). Oh, I don't know! He was sitting with his mouth open, waiting for a fly to come his way.

DUKE. Rather a lengthy process, wasn't it?

DUNCAN. Just what I thought; so I took to catching a few for him.

DUKE. I hope he was grateful.

DUNCAN. I believe you! Why, he winks at me every time we meet.

DUKE. And you've met constantly, I suppose?

DUNCAN. Every afternoon for three weeks. I've fed him regularly, and we're the best friends in the world.

DUKE. Naturally!

DUNCAN (*mournfully*). But, you see, the best of friends must part. I'm going back to Eton to-morrow.

DUKE (*drily*). Take him with you.

DUNCAN (*shakes his head*). The other chaps wouldn't like it. No, I shall have to leave him, just where I found him. But what bothers me is who the dickens will feed him when I'm gone. You see, I've fed him so regularly.

DUKE. Why not Rudge, my gardener?

DUNCAN. I've tried him.

DUKE. Oh, you've made friends with Rudge, have you? Rudge has been in the plot, eh? Then you've been giving him tobacco.

DUNCAN. Occasionally.

DUKE. Every man has his price. Rudge's price in Spain was wine. (*Laughs, to ARBUTHNOT who comes down off the rampart.*) Scoundrel! Why, when he wanted to get wine out of the peasants, he used to pretend to be a Roman Catholic. All the men did. I used to see them in the villages crossing themselves devoutly, by way of keeping up the pretence. (*To Duncan.*) And Rudge won't feed him for you?

DUNCAN. Rudge is afraid of him.

DUKE. But why can't he do what he did before he had the good fortune to meet you—feed himself?

DUNCAN. I've looked after him so well, I'm afraid he's lost the habit.

DUKE (*grimly*). Very likely. Bad habits are soon formed. (*Thoughtfully.*) It's a difficult question.

DUNCAN. Isn't it? And I can't bear to think of him starving.

DUKE. You think he would starve?

DUNCAN. I'm sure of it.

DUKE. Well, look here, youngster—suppose I were to feed him for you?

DUNCAN (*awestruck*). You? The Duke of Wellington?

DUKE (*simply*). Why not? I don't suppose he's amazing particular, is he, who feeds him, so long as he gets it?

DUNCAN. No, I don't suppose he is.

DUKE. What's his name?

DUNCAN. I just call him Toadie.

DUKE (*chuckling*). I've heard that name before! Eh, Arbuthnot?

DUNCAN. We'll call him something else if you like.

DUKE. No, Toadie'll do very well. (*Doubtfully, scratching a trim grey whisker.*) Then I shall have to catch the flies?

DUNCAN. Yes, if you do it properly.

DUKE (*stoutly*). Oh, I'll do it properly. If a thing's worth doing at all, it's worth doing well.

DUNCAN. And of course it's worth doing, to keep a poor creature from starvation.

DUKE. Of course! Even a toad, which has never been one of my great favourites.

DUNCAN (*hopefully*). Then you'll really do it?

DUKE. I will. And when flies fail us, as they've a habit of doing in the winter?

DUNCAN. Well, I should find him a small worm or two.

DUKE. Ah!

DUNCAN. Or you may try him with a little milk.

DUKE. Milk! Warm milk, eh?

DUNCAN. With just the chill off, you know.

DUKE. Exactly! And I daresay you'd like me to write to you at Eton, and tell you how he goes on.

DUNCAN (*eagerly*). Will you?

DUKE. I will. And if anything should happen to him—

DUNCAN. How can anything happen, if he's properly looked after?

DUKE (*gravely*). Well, you see, Duncan, I might inadvertently give him too large a fly, and choke him; or he might take a personal dislike to me, and refuse to feed; or the winter might carry him off. You know, he wears his chest rather exposed.

DUNCAN (*sadly*). Oh, Toadie!

DUKE. Any way, if the worst should happen, you shall receive the sad intelligence on mourning notepaper, and I'll undertake that Toadie shall be decently buried, in a cardboard box, under the beech tree, with all the honours of war.—There! Will that do?

DUNCAN. Beautifully! (*And at that moment a King's Messenger in riding dress, splashed and heated, appears through the trees and*

comes quickly down the sloping path. ARBUTHNOT sees him, and goes up to meet him.)

DUKE (to DUNCAN). And now just put Toadie down for a minute, and tell me this.

ARBUTHNOT (while DUNCAN puts the toad down carefully on the leaves under the beech tree). Your Grace! Excuse me!—

DUKE. One moment, Arbuthnot; I want to settle this first. (Draws DUNCAN affectionately to him, with his hand on his shoulder.) Now, look here, youngster, tell me—what you are going to be when you grow up?

DUNCAN (proudly). A soldier, like my father.

DUKE. If you're a soldier like your father, you'll do very well. He was in the forlorn hope at Badajoz when we took the place, and he did more trying to keep the men quiet afterwards than any other officer. Why, they were so mad savage they very nearly shot him.

DUNCAN. Yes, he told me that—and what a funk he was in!

DUKE. Then you tell him this from me, Duncan—that when you're old enough to serve your King and country he's to write to me at Apsley House, and I'll see you have a nomination for the Guards.

DUNCAN (delighted). The Guards! Up, Guards!—

DUKE (curtly). That's all damn'd nonsense! Never said anything of the kind!—And remember this; when you go to your first *levée*, you let me know at the Horse Guards, and I'll make a point of being there to receive you.

DUNCAN. Oh, I say!—

DUKE. Now that'll do. (Points to the old thirty-two-pounder.) You go and sit down there and keep very quiet, while I see what this gentleman wants. (Turns to ARBUTHNOT, who brings the King's Messenger down to him, while DUNCAN clammers up and sits under the gun.)

DUNCAN (aside). The Guards! I say, won't the mater be pleased! (Tired out with excitement and the long walk from Deal, he leans against the gun-carriage and gradually falls fast asleep.)

DUKE (to the King's Messenger). Well, sir? What is it?

KING'S MESSENGER. I have the honour to be the bearer of this letter to your Grace from His Majesty.

DUKE (takes the letter). The King is at Brighton?

KING'S MESSENGER. Yes, your Grace.

DUKE. And he writes to me ? Then the Ministry are out !

KING'S MESSENGER. Yes, your Grace.

DUKE. Dismissed, I apprehend ?

KING'S MESSENGER. Yes, your Grace. Lord Melbourne was with His Majesty yesterday afternoon.

DUKE. But it's in none of the morning papers, is it ?

KING'S MESSENGER. Yes, your Grace. *The Times* has a short announcement.

DUKE. Ah ?

KING'S MESSENGER. I understand Lord Melbourne desired it should be kept secret till to-day, and told no one. But the Chancellor called on his lordship late last night, on his lordship's return to town—

DUKE (*contemptuously*). Oh, Brougham ! Then of course it got into *The Times*.

ARBUTHNOT (*aside to the King's Messenger, while the DUKE leaves them to open and read His Majesty's letter*). What's the meaning of it ?

KING'S MESSENGER. The King thought they couldn't go on without Lord Althorpe to lead the Commons.

ARBUTHNOT. So he kicked them out, eh ?

KING'S MESSENGER. He's been watching his opportunity for months.

ARBUTHNOT. Melbourne won't like it.

KING'S MESSENGER (*laughs*). He don't care in the least. He offers to lay six to four the Whigs are back again before Easter.

DUKE (*moving towards them, as he folds up the letter*). His Majesty commands my attendance at Brighton. You return at once, sir ?

KING'S MESSENGER. At once, your Grace.

DUKE. You came through London ?

KING'S MESSENGER. No, your Grace ; I made my way across country.

DUKE. And you return the same way ?

KING'S MESSENGER. Unless your Grace has further commands for me.

DUKE. I'll just go up to the Castle and write a dutiful acknowledgment of His Majesty's most gracious letter. You shall carry it, sir ; you will be there before us. (*The King's Messenger bows and is going, when the DUKE motions him to stop.*) Be good enough to wait one moment, and we'll go up to the Castle together. (*The*

King's Messenger bows and goes under the beech tree to wait, while the DUKE takes ARBUTHNOT aside.) What did I tell you, Arbuthnot? I knew poor Spencer's death would be too much for 'em.

ARBUTHNOT. The dismissal will be rather a thunderbolt.

DUKE (*chuckling*). A bolt out of the blue! Now we shall have to find Peel. Damn it all, what's he want to go running off into Italy for! (*Then he sees DUNCAN fast asleep under the gun.*) Hullo! the young gentleman's apparently got my gift; he can sleep when he pleases, if the conversation no longer interests him.—But if I'm to be in the Ministry, Arbuthnot, I don't quite see how I'm going to find the time to feed Toadie.

ARBUTHNOT. We'd better tell Rudge.

DUKE (*obstinately*). No—no—a promise is a promise. Whether I'm to be premier, or Peel, the promise must be kept and Toadie must be properly fed. We'll take the creature with us, Arbuthnot, and look after him at the back of Apsley House. There's plenty of room for all of us. (*He stands looking at DUNCAN, with his hands behind his back.*)

ARBUTHNOT. He sleeps very soundly.

DUKE. As soundly as I did in Spain, when I got the chance.

ARBUTHNOT. That was not often.

DUKE. Mostly when Masséna was not in the field against me. I never got much sleep when Masséna was about. (*Half aside.*) The boy's very like his mother.

ARBUTHNOT (*astonished*). You remember her, Duke?

DUKE. Perfectly. Between ourselves, Arbuthnot, she was one of the few women who ever made much of an impression on me. I should know her again anywhere. She was a very pretty young woman—with a peculiarly sweet voice. (*At that moment DUNCAN's sister, EVELYN MURRAY, calls 'DUN-CAN' below the rampart. The DUKE starts and turns.*)

EVELYN (*calls*). Dun-can! Where are you? (*Then she appears over the ramparts, between the guns, and sees them.*) Oh, I beg your pardon!

DUKE. 'Ssh! Your little brother's fast asleep. Arbuthnot, give him to me. No, don't wake him. (*ARBUTHNOT lifts DUNCAN and gives him to the DUKE, and the DUKE carries him to EVELYN and puts him in her arms.*) It's a pity to wake him. He's not very heavy. Can you manage?

EVELYN. Oh, yes, your Grace.

DUKE. He's tired out, poor chap.

EVELYN. I always have to carry him up to bed. He does such mad things.

DUKE. My kind regards to your father; and tell your mother I'll look after Duncan for her, when he goes into the service.

EVELYN. Yes, your Grace. Good-bye.

DUKE (*takes off his hat*). Good-bye, my dear; take care how you go. (*Watches her as she disappears.*) That's right. Good-bye.

EVELYN (*answers below*). Good-bye.

DUKE (*aside*). How like they both are! How very like! (*After a pause, briskly.*) And now we must get along to Brighton, on His Majesty's business, and take Toadie with us, I suppose.

(*Goes to the tree and looks for the toad. To the King's Messenger, irritably.*)

DUKE. Why, damn it all, sir! that's a confounded stupid trick of yours!

KING'S MESSENGER (*stammering*). Your Grace?

DUKE. Don't you see what you've done, sir? You've trodden on the animal! He's dead!

KING'S MESSENGER. Your Grace? What animal?

DUKE. Devil take it, sir, why can't you look where you're going? You've killed my young friend Duncan Murray's toad. My toad! I wouldn't have had that happen for a hundred pounds! Confounded carelessness. (*Calls.*) Rudge! Rudge! come here!

RUDGE (*enters and salutes*). Yes, Sir Arthur?

DUKE. Look here, Rudge, just you go up and get a cardboard box from the housekeeper at the Castle, d'you see?—and put that poor wretched thing in it—with a few leaves—and bury it there—at the foot of that beech. Now you do that at once, before you have your tea.

RUDGE. Yes, Sir Arthur. (*Salutes and goes.*)

DUKE (*to the King's Messenger*). Another time, sir, when you come here on the country's business, just you be good enough to look where you're planting your feet. If a man don't look where he's going, you may take your oath he won't go far.

KING'S MESSENGER (*stammers*). Very sorry, your Grace!

DUKE (*curtly*). That'll do, sir.—Arbuthnot, did Duncan say he was going back to Eton to-morrow?

ARBUTHNOT. So I understood, Duke.

DUKE. Then I shall have to write to him in the morning, and break it to him gently. As if it isn't bad enough for the boy to have to go back to school at all, without learning when he gets

there that his pet's dead. Too bad! Too bad! (*As he goes back up the sloping path.*) Come, Arbuthnot; we must have the horses put into the britzka at once. (*And as RUDGE re-enters, carrying a small cardboard box, there comes the faint booming of a gun.*) Ah! the sunset gun—from Deal Castle. (*With a couple of fingers to the brim of his tall hat.*) Poor Toadie! Bury him pretty deep, Rudge.

RUDGE. Yes, Sir Arthur.

DUKE (*turns to go*). Come, Arbuthnot. To Brighton and His Majesty! (*As he goes up the path and disappears, followed by ARBUTHNOT and the King's Messenger.*) Poor Toadie! Poor Toadie! (*While RUDGE kneels at the foot of the beech tree, scooping away the leaves, preparatory to digging the little grave.*)

[AUTHOR'S NOTE.—It is recorded that when, some nine years later, Duncan Murray, the young Guards' officer, attended his first *levée*, the Commander-in-Chief stepped forward and shook his hand, saying 'Poor Toadie! Eh? Poor Toadie!']

WALTER FRITH.

THE ORIGINAL THOMAS ATKINS.

BY COLONEL ROBERT HOLDEN MACKENZIE.

'It's Tommy this, and Tommy that, and Tommy get away;
But it's "Thank you, Mr. Atkins," when the band begins to play.'

WHEN the present war is over, whether that consummation is achieved sooner or later, it will be remembered to no small extent as that in which the British soldier came at long last into his own. There is no denying that hitherto the soldier seems never to have been one of the nation. From the day he took the King's shilling he has been regarded as something quite apart. If his praises have been occasionally sung in war, he has been put aside again in peace as something to be kept at arm's length. It is the old story. An old writer says of the profession of arms in Tudor times that 'such as had followed the wars are despised almost of every man until the very pinch of need doth come':

'Our God and soldier we alike adore
When at the brink of ruin, not before;
After deliverance both alike requited,
Our God forgotten and the soldier slighted.'

To-day there are indications of a change—it is hoped a lasting change—in the attitude of the nation towards the army. A feeling has arisen that the failings of the soldier, such as they appear, are far outweighed by his numerous virtues and unconquerable bravery.

In these progressive days it is not surprising that the average soldier should in many respects be looked upon as an improvement upon his predecessor, who is credited with having sworn so terribly in Flanders. But, after all, he is the same individual. If we follow the growth of the British as a military power to Crécy and Agincourt, thence to the New Model, and the standing army with its subsequent glorious record, the British soldier, through all the changes of the art of war, will be found unchangeable. The heart that throbs beneath the khaki jacket is the same that throbbed under the red coat, and the tightly buttoned coattee. The fighting spirit remains unchanged. A splendid fighting man is he who is affectionately and familiarly known throughout the Empire by the name of Thomas Atkins. It has been said that

the world knows nothing of her greatest men. Mr. Roebuck, the Member for Sheffield in the 'fifties, used to tell the perfectly true story of his staying in a country house at the time of the death of the great Duke of Wellington. He spoke, in the early morning, to the gardener, an elderly man, who was mowing the lawn. 'Bad news to-day.' 'Is there, sir?' said the man. 'Yes,' Mr. Roebuck said, 'the Duke's dead at last.' 'Who, sir?' 'The Duke of Wellington.' 'I'm very sorry for the gentleman,' replied the man, going on with his work, 'but I never heard of him.'

The humble private soldier is more fortunate than the great Field Marshal; everyone has heard of Thomas Atkins. But whence the name? There is nothing modern about it. Since the memory of living man it has, by universal consent, been associated with the ordinary British soldier, in much the same manner that his harder-living, harder-swearing, but not less brave predecessor was dignified with that of 'lobster'—not because of the hardness of his shell, but on account of the colour of his uniform. Still, who was Thomas Atkins? And how did he come by that name—if such an individual ever existed? The man in the street will tell you that no such person ever lived in the flesh, but that a War Office clerk created him by selecting the name haphazard and placing it, for want of a better, at the end of an official military document as a guide to the filling in of the said form. There is just a semblance of truth in this; but there is good ground for the additional contention that Thomas Atkins, in spite of his name becoming originally notorious on account of its association with a certain specimen army form, did actually live, move, and have his being as a soldier of the King. Indeed, more than one writer has put forward a claim to the identity of the actual individual.

In a short article written some years ago, Lord Dillon claimed to have discovered the original in a certain Thomas Atkins of the Fifth Foot, now the Northumberland Fusiliers, whose services and vicissitudes were enumerated in an official document, dated January 1830. This pretender—may we call him?—enlisted in 1806 at the age of seventeen, served in the Peninsula, shared in the misfortunes of the fever-stricken expedition to Walcheren, was wounded in the crowning victory of Waterloo, and was eventually discharged to pension as a sergeant in 1829, with, as we are told, a bald head, grey eyes, sallow complexion, a scar on his left hand, and some five feet ten inches to his credit. Lord Dillon's reputation as an authority on military manners and customs is

such as to demand some assurance on the part of any individual questioning his lordship's accuracy. His protégé is an interesting individual who bore the honoured name of Thomas Atkins: but are we justified in accepting him as the original, in the absence of any suggestion of his name appearing as a specimen signature to an army form?

Colonel Newnham Davis put in a plausible but improbable claim a year or two ago, in the pages of *Printers' Pie*, on behalf of a certain soldier in the Grenadier Company of the 33rd Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, who is said to have been killed in the Low Countries. The writer makes the great Duke himself responsible for the selection of this man, and fixes the date as that of the year 1843, when the Duke, as Commander-in-Chief, was asked to suggest a specimen name for a new model method of keeping the soldier's accounts. But Colonel Newnham Davis's candidate has not a leg to stand upon, besides being, as we shall see, forestalled by a very much earlier claimant.

A more reasonable claim was that made in 1908 for a rifleman. This 'green-jacket' is said to have attained fame about the year 1845, about which time an authorised pattern ledger is supposed to have been introduced for soldiers' accounts. We are told that this document contained printed headings and trading items in place of what had previously been entered by the pay-sergeants in manuscript. There is evidence of the existence of printed ledgers some time before this, but it is possible that all general officers had not agreed to recognise them when inspecting the regimental books. This particular ledger had a model form of a completed account pasted inside the cover, and it bore the signature 'Thomas Atkins' with that of 'A. J. Lawrance—Captain,' showing that it had emanated from that distinguished corps, the Rifle Brigade, in which presumably the original had served as a private, or, to be strictly correct, rifleman. This claim would be admissible enough but for the date being so recent.

That the name Thomas Atkins originated in the signature of a private soldier to a specimen official model for keeping soldiers' accounts is tolerably certain. The difficulty is to identify the particular individual. By far the best case so far made out is that of a gunner in the Royal Artillery. In the good old days when George III. was king, life in the ranks of the British Army was very hard, and the men saw little of their pay. William Cobbett, before he became notorious, served for eight years in the

ranks of the 54th Regiment, and he himself speaks of the difficulty he experienced in saving even a halfpenny which he proposed to spend on a red herring as an addition to his scanty breakfast. But, alas! the halfpenny was stolen. One can imagine what a godsend to the private soldier must have been a comrade who could initiate him into the mysteries of the art of getting his own out of some of his superiors. Such a rarity was the original Thomas Atkins.

It is well known that even as late as the commencement of the nineteenth century—the time when our hero flourished—soldiers' accounts were anything but well kept. Nor were they proverbial for their accuracy. Reading between the lines we may learn something from Francis Grose, he whom Robert Burns tells us had :

‘Quat the spurtle blade and dogskin wallet,
And ta'en the antiquarian trade, I think they call it.’

In one of his humorous veins Grose, who was Paymaster of a regiment some time before, boasts that he had but two books of accounts—his right and left hand pockets! But, seriously, in those days many of the men could neither read nor write, and were consequently dependent for their just dues on the honesty of their pay-sergeant. Occasionally some educated scapegrace would find his way into the ranks, but we hear nothing of his efforts to tackle the pay-sergeant. That wayward individual Samuel Taylor Coleridge, when he fled from Cambridge, enlisted in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons under the name of Silas Tomkyn Comberbatch. He is said to have found his new life hard enough at first to make him regret the step he had taken. But he won favour with his comrades in the ranks by writing their letters. There is a story that he was employed as a mess waiter, and that one day he ventured to correct a classical quotation made by one of the officers at the table. But it was left to a more humble individual to do battle over the soldier's pay. Suddenly there arose a genius, a born accountant, in the person of a gunner in the Royal Regiment of Artillery of the name of Thomas Atkins. He soon became a very natural object of admiration to his comrades, and an object of awe on the part of the pay-sergeants. Even by some of the officers he is said to have been at first regarded with suspicion. They thought he might be something of what is known in the army as a ‘barrack-room lawyer’; and barrack-room lawyers always have been, and are even at the present day, fought shy of. They were no greater

favourites at the time of which we treat than in the days of Sergeant Kite. It is Kite who enlists an attorney, and is rebuked by his captain. 'An attorney! wert thou mad? Discharge him. Discharge him instantly. I will have nobody in my company that can write; a fellow that can write can draw petitions.'

Gunner Atkins was, however, a decent fellow; he had proved himself a man of physical courage in the field, and he soon earned the respect of his officers and of the more superior of the non-commissioned ranks for his moral courage. He had some reason for taking to heart the grievances under which the British soldier at that time laboured, particularly in regard to his accounts, for had he not more than once been made to suffer in his own pocket by the craft and subtilty of the pay-sergeant? He started a book in which he entered and balanced his accounts monthly; and so is believed to have originated the idea of a soldier's pocket ledger, or, as it was called at first in the Royal Artillery and afterwards in the army generally, a 'Tommy Atkins.' There is little doubt that this account book or pocket ledger was generally known by that name in the regiment; and it is equally true that there was then serving in the Royal Artillery a gunner of the name of Thomas Atkins, whose method of keeping his accounts was honoured by almost general adoption in the service. If this be the case, the distinction of having produced the original of the familiar title by which that splendid fighting man, the British soldier, is affectionately known all over the Empire, must be conceded to the Royal Artillery.

The name has been objected to as insufficiently dignified. It, however, never fails to appeal to the British public, and is happily suggestive of the man in whom all our hopes at the present time are vested. It reminds us of those who have suffered as perhaps no British soldiers have ever suffered before, of the individuals whose bravery has been such as to quicken the pulse and to dim the eye of even the least sentimental, and whose exploits and endurance amid circumstances and hardships difficult to describe and impossible to exaggerate, have been worthy to rank with the most glorious deeds recorded in the annals of the past of any army at any time. Tommy Atkins has been described as a gentleman and a hero. The former he has become by constant association and sympathy with his officers on and off parade. A hero he has proved himself to be over and over again. One of the most inspiring examples of his heroism ever recorded was that related by Mr. Fortescue in

one of his recent lectures on Military History at Trinity College, Cambridge. The *Warren Hastings*, when carrying four companies of the King's Royal Rifle Corps and other details in 1907, was wrecked on the island of Réunion. When the ship struck, sentries of the Rifles were at once posted at various points on the lower deck ; and there they remained while the boats were lowered to take the battalion ashore. The water rose steadily upon them inch by inch, and had reached their chests, when at last an officer came to summon them also, last of all, to take their places in the boats. He collected them all, as he thought, but in the noise and darkness he missed one man and left him behind. The man saw his comrades disappear up the ladder, and the officer about to follow them. Then, but not till then, did he ask, *without quitting his post*, ' Beg pardon, sir, may I come too ? ' That story is typical of the discipline, the self-sacrifice, the valour, and the nobility of character of the British soldier of to-day—an honour to his prototype, the original Tommy Atkins.

ADESTE FIDELES : A VISION.

‘The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.’—*Ecclesiastes*.

THE great battle had died away to a mutter, and the roar of the red artillery had ceased but for the occasional protest of distant *soixante-quinzes*. For the eighth consecutive day the Allies had fought on a far-flung battle line of close on five hundred miles. And now on June 18, in what men dare hardly call the year of our Lord 1915, the British and French lines of battle joined in Flanders, ten miles south-east of Mont St. Jean, and athwart the great paved *chaussée* hard by the century-old sites of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, and but a modern gun-shot from Malplaquet and memories of Marlborough.

The sun had gone down in a sea of blood and glory, and the Allies slept where they stood, weary and happy, scarce heeding in the joy of successful battle the dead that lay in thousands, a horror and an offence under the summer moon. Eh, sirs ! but what a use to put the image of God ! Yet there they lay for all our civilisation, beneath the shadows of the roadside poplars and across the shell-pitted *pavé*. Dogged had done it once again. The Allied artillery had lifted the cheering infantry into the German trenches and out of them again and again. Eight days of unflinching expenditure of good French and English blood and tri-nitro-toluene had seen the Huns driven back, snarling and fighting but whipped—whipped for all time—from line upon line of deep-sunk trenches and vicious entanglements, from fortified orchards and embattled villages. The whole of Europe—nay ! of the civilised world—had watched and hoped and wondered, as men of old had looked for news of the Crusades, and gloried to see the right prevail and men die with the light of victory in their eyes and the sure and certain hope in their hearts.

Along the great *chaussée* from Tournai a whole British corps lay in bivouac, cooking and resting, the better to clinch the day's work in the morning. The columns of infantry lay in close masses right and left of the roadway, and further out the artillery, or such of it as was not deployed on the rise ahead, was sending its horses to

water by brigades, the which seemed likely to last late into the night. On the *pavé* the engine of the car of an 'Eliza,' as the men called the 'liaison' officer, champed by the side of the corps commander's Daimler—'orders from G.H.Q.' in the jargon of the army.

The suppressed hum of the resting soldiers was dying away, and the only sounds were the occasional burr of the motor ambulances returning from the collecting stations, the jink of artillery harness on the horses returning from water, and the distant shouting of stretcher parties searching for wounded. Now and again a heavy shell would roar in sheer wantonness over the field and sink with a crash, while away to the south the intermittent mutter of the *soixante-quinzes* spoke of sleep and peace on a road untold. And all the while the midsummer moon bathed the scene in its soft clean light, that made the guns and their wagons by the roadside stand out '*définitifs et noirs*.'

Alongside the roadway, past the parked wagons, four cloaked figures rode silently and pulled up by a cross-road to listen awhile. They then trotted slowly along the soft edge of the great *chaussée*, turning into a grass field near a cross-road. By the turnpike two drivers of the Army Service Corps were endeavouring to find the fault in a broken-down lorry, and stood up as the party passed.

'Who might them blokes be?' asked one. 'Rum looking lot, too.'

'Oh, Frenchies, I suppose,' remarked his companion. 'They mostly wear fancy togs. One of that lot looks more like the Lord Mayor's coachman than a fighting man.'

'Well, I likes Frenchies, I do, and they were very decent to us the day we took Lilly.'

The party rode on past the lorry and its attendants, and followed a cart track through a field of ripening corn that rippled and shuddered in the soft night breeze, till they came to a slight knoll. Here they drew rein and looked about. It was a strange and beautiful sight in the glorious moonlight that lapped the countryside. The great masses of resting troops along the roadways could only be distinguished from woods by the fires that twinkled among them, though the occasional blaze from a gun, or the rattle of the eighteen-pounders firing fitful *rafales*, added point to the distant hum of moving troops. Now and again the glare of the moon would pale before some light-ball launched from an aeroplane or the long beam of a search-light.

The watchers appeared to gaze long and earnestly over the rolling

fields to the white line of the main Brussels road, across which the poplars cast shadows like the rungs of a ladder, while the search-light beams would 'teach light to counterfeit a gloom.' Round them in the trampled corn lay the unburied dead, who had fallen in the attack across the open bosom of the field, weeds in the world a-flower. As they looked out over the roll of the land, long black streams moved out from the shadow of a wood and broke into a dozen different trickles. A resting corps was moving up to take its place for the morrow's fight, fresh and as yet unbroken in battle, and behind the long streams of the foot soldiers, interrupted lines showed that the artillery also were moving.

The figure on the white horse waved his hand to the east. 'See, Marshall! the fresh troops are coming. The Guard no doubt, and the Reserve Artillery. I have not taught in vain. Jomini saw to that. That was ever my principle.'

'Sire, it ever was, on the word of an old soldier. Blow a hole with the massed artillery and let the Guard march through. These English have no Guard corps, but those are evidently fresh troops. Despite the week's battle they have plenty. The broken corps hold the ground they win, and the fresh troops march on. Tomorrow will be their worst day, Sire. If they break through they win more than a battle. *Nom d'une pipe!* these English can fight, as we know well, Sire!'

'You remember, Marshal, how I ever wanted to be friends with them? It was that rascal Pitt who never would listen. Some day I will tell you how I nearly became an officer of their Indian artillery. But who comes?'

Two more figures rode up to the knoll, followed by a Hussar orderly with a pelisse blowing loose in the breeze.

As they came up to the crest one of them leant forward.

'Sir! Sir! It is the Emperor himself.'

'Pish, man! You mean General Buonaparte. . . . But, nay! this is no place to quarrel over a rogue's titles. Let us give him his own title, and be d—d to him. Can you see who is with him?'

'One of his marshals, Sir, but not one that I know.'

'A quartermaster-general should know everything, De Lancey. You ought to be able to give me a memorandum about him at once, sir.'

'So I could if you tell me his name, Sir.'

'Well, we will salute them.'

The leading figure rode forward followed by him that had been

called De Lancey, and both raised their hats. The humped figure on the white horse drew himself up in the saddle.

'The Duke of Wellington?'

'At your service, Sire.'

'Ah! you no longer insist in calling me General, my lord.'

'I called you General, Sire, when ordered to do so. Here, when ancient and honourable foes fight alongside, perish all ancient feuds.'

'It is well. Perish the old stories. We are here, if I mistake not, I for my *Belle France* and her allies, and you for your Merry England and hers. Field-marshal, I salute you and your brave English. Words will not describe our mutual relationship. They are inscribed forever in the halls of glory. *Ma foi!* Field-marshal, but even I have never seen men fight as your English fight.'

'Sire, we fight for freedom of ourselves and the rest of Europe, and we fight, with the French to inspire us, so that the Right may stand by itself once again.'

'Well said, my Lord Wellington. I see, too, that the English fight in line as you taught them, and behind the crest too when they can, as you did at Mont St. Jean, so that my guns could not see your squares.'

'Yes, Sire, and they mass their guns as they learnt from you.'

'Had I had these flying men I should have known what Grouchy was doing, and that the old *diable* Blücher was coming up to Planchenoit.'

'True, Sire, but I should have known that you were massing on the Charleroi-Brussels road, and should have assembled many more men to meet you. You must remember that I was stretched out all along the Belgian border waiting till I could discover your line of advance.'

'True, true, *Maréchal*. We must not refight all our fights. I've promised Soult here to go to Marshal Joffre's Headquarters to-night. Permit me to assure you of my eternal regard and to wish your English all honour and success. *Adieu, M. le Duc.*'

The Emperor saluted, and turning Vilonel on his haunches, disappeared across the standing corn.

'Tis the first time ever I met him, De Lancey, save that I saw him in the distance ride down the line of his troops at Mont St. Jean, eagles lowered and bands playing. You remember? God send that it means great victory! Come now, let us away to our left. I see and hear guns massing there.'

General Headquarters and these were being digested by the flickering light of the lantern and the flash of torchlights on maps.

Past the columns of the sixty-pounder trains and their perspiring shires, and through the howitzer parks, rode—if shades may ride—the shades of His Grace of Wellington and his Deputy Quartermaster-General De Lancey, and to both the power and might and majesty and dominion of a sufficient artillery was no new thing.

‘Egad, De Lancey, I think we hold them here. Guns and more guns is a good rule, though, mind you, I used to find those gunners very tiresome, very tiresome. I see a light near the crest. We should find the artillery commander there.’

The artillery commander was explaining his orders for the morrow. ‘And so, gentlemen, as you see, General Headquarters once again expects us to do the impossible, and if we get no counter-order my instructions will now stand and you can carry on.’

‘Do you hear the fellow, De Lancey. Just what I always said about them. They would criticise the Archangel Gabriel himself. They had the impertinence to think they knew more about it than I did at Waterloo. They gave me trouble there, and didn’t like it when I said so.’

The artillery general continued: ‘I don’t want anyone to start registering in the morning till I give the order, but have all your lines laid out by compass to-night. Ah! Here comes General M——. We shall now hear what the other groups are to do.’

The maps rustled, and the shadows moved to look at a small alert figure who slipped off a pony, oblivious of the muffled figures in the gloom of the ruin.

‘M——! De Lancey, surely I know that name, but I thought he was killed at Waterloo. Oh, I am thinking of Norman Ramsay, am I? M—— wasn’t killed. Ah, yes, now I remember. Ramsay was that d—d fellow who would charge the French with his guns. Hard on him was I? He was a d—d fine fellow, only I would not let him know that I thought so. If you told these gunners what you really thought about them you could not hold them. M—— was the man who had that pile of dead cuirassiers and lancers in front of his guns. Yes, I remember. I suppose this one is another of the same kidney. Well! well! let us ride on. Stay! let us hear what he is saying.’

The artillery general was winding up his instructions.

‘General M—— tells me that the whole of the mechanical park will be within a mile of us at midnight. The ammunition columns

are waiting now by the cottage back on the road ; I can see their lights. Two hundred rounds per gun is to be brought up and 150 rounds per howitzer. We will blow their souls out in the morning. Good night, gentlemen. You will find me here, and I want each brigade commander to ring me up as soon as his telephone is through.'

And His Grace of Wellington rode away into the moonlight towards the front of the British line, past regiments and batteries that lay where they had halted ; past Highland regiments and Irish regiments ; past Welsh regiments that slept a sleep free from vowels ; past the simple old regiments of the British line that did their work without fuss ; past Territorial regiments that could see as red as any of them, and had already written red their annals in the roll of fame ; past, too, the corps from Hindostan who, having seen the German running squealing before their bayonets, cared no longer for man or devil ; and past the thrice-proved boys of Canada who link so happily the French with the English. Past all these sleeping through the short night on the unshorn grass rode the mighty shade who knew so well the worth of what he saw, till he came to the restless battle front. Here men dug and built and sweated far into the night to secure that which they had captured. *Toujours en vedette* the sappers laboured in front of the trenches with barriers of wire, taking no more thought than the lilies, and working parties dragged carts piled high with empty sand-bags or hand-grenades that the General Staff had pushed up from the motor parks.

From the sleeping divisions back again to the great road and the parties clearing up from the fighting of the afternoon, where dead and wounded had been almost as thick as the countless stones of the *pavé*, round a line of trench and a ruined village. Behind a hedgerow a chaplain was laying to their rest in a long trench five British boys and a grey-haired veteran, to whom old dustman Death had ordered 'Pile your arms ! Pile your arms ! Pile your arms !' Just a trench behind a hill, and the shade of Arthur Wellesley uncovered, pausing a minute by the open grave, while the chaplain read :

'I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'

Back past a cheery marching battalion whistling 'Who's your lady friend?' ; back past a long column of food wagons, for the living must live, and bayonets, at any rate British bayonets, without beef lose much of their sharpness. A contrast from the grave to a music-

hall air, but in war the dead must bury the dead, and 'The sound of a sigh doesn't travel well, the lilt of a laugh goes far.'

Back again through the jam of ammunition columns, past lorries innumerable and all the machinery for replenishing an army as and while it fights, till a small village is reached. Here sit waiting lines of cars, from which staff officers alight or enter and whirl away, and cyclists come and go. It is the moving station of General Headquarters and its advanced *échelon*, the staff that are necessary for the actual fight. The great offices that control the Army and its services are further back. G.H.Q. itself occupies but one or two small houses. The Chief of the General Staff has just brought the Commander-in-Chief the large map marked with the very latest news from the whole front, and the positions of the Allied corps that touch our flanks. Sufficient had been known earlier for the morrow's orders to be issued and plans made. Now, happily, later news showed the earlier estimate to have been accurate.

The British Field-Marshal sat shading his eyes and gazing at the map, while a memorandum of the gun ammunition immediately available, and available within forty-eight hours, lay by his side. The biggest army that ever Britain had put in the field, an army far larger than ever Napoleon commanded, and before him the greatest military power in the world! on the down grade true, but dangerous as a tiger shot in the haunches. Beside him Allies who looked for, and gave fullest support. Decisions yet to be made that night, with these immense factors to handle.

Perhaps the hand of dead Arthur Wellesley rested a moment on that shoulder and helped the cause of England and the civilised world. At any rate the necessary decision was made and the orders given, and the mighty shade left a scene of thought and anxiety that he understood so well.

From the British General Headquarters to the far flank where the British joined with the French, the riders wandered in time to find a night attack in progress. A German regiment had gone berserk and thrown itself on a sleeping French corps that had taken too much for granted. *Rosalie* was fighting for dear life, amid the rallying cry and trumpet call '*Au drapeau!*' But the French were not to be denied. The fierce flushed faces of the surprised *pantalons rouges* swept out and over the Bavarian regiment that had counted without its host, and the machine-guns rattled their message of defiance in a paean of joyous might. In a short fifteen minutes the somnambulist attack had died away, and the French staggered

back to their straw. But the ghostly heart of Arthur Wellesley leapt to hear the shout and to see a neighbouring British corps fall in to the support of their Allies. High trespass among tired troops in the short summer hours of sleep was not to be lightly undertaken.

'By the Lord Harry, De Lancey! that was as good a piece of work as ever I saw. I would not have missed that for a pretty penny. Hark, now! they are still at it.' And a call came down the breeze of some enthusiast not content with the repulse, '*Au drapeau! Au drapeau! En avant les enfants perdus!*' 'What a battle, De Lancey! What a war! And they talk of a scrap of paper. What a story that d—d charlatan Alison would have made of it!'

As the shouts died away on the still night air, and the musketry gave place to dropping shots, the figures passed through an opening in the line and came to a knoll that lay between the opposing lines. Their horses' hoofs fell silently on the short crisp grass, till the Duke pulled up suddenly and seized the arm of his companion.

'God bless my soul, De Lancey! Who is that?'

'Who is what, Sir?'

'The man on horseback by that gorse bush.'

De Lancey looked, and saw to the right of a small bush a figure on a horse looking intently away to the east, where a faint hint of a lighter tinge told of the approaching close of the short summer night, and the short hours of rest.

'I see him, sir, but though I seem to know him, I can't put a name to him. He looks anxious enough.'

The pair rode on up the slope.

'My God! De Lancey, it is old "Vorwärts" himself. Poor old Vorwärts! I forgot in all the glory of to-day that my old comrade would be about. Gneisenau, too, who ran his business for him. Vorwärts could not manage that.'

And as they looked the old Prussian marshal took off his cocked hat, and his white locks stirred in the breeze. The watchers sat and gazed on the broken figure. The arms flew out suddenly in one great appeal heavenwards. '*Mein Gott! Mein Gott!*' and the cry had the wail of despair of a human soul in agony. '*Eloi, Eloi,*' as horse and rider disappeared down the reverse slopes of the knoll.

Well might the sight that met the eyes of the riders have moved the aged marshal to misery. To the knowledge of foredoomed failure came at that moment the horror of the silent slopes. Early in the day, for only the dead remained, some shells from the British

eighteen-pounders had found a force concealed behind the knoll, by way of the tell-tale aeroplane. A burst of shrapnel and high explosive had piled dead men and dead gun teams high in fantastic shapes, among the flowers of the field.

The British Marshal and his Staff Officer looked grimly at the tally of slain and once again remarked, 'Poor old Vorwärts!'

But while they looked and mused awhile, the soft breeze of the false dawn died away and the eastern sky slowly reddened, and a cock crew in a distant farm. Far away through the faint blue mist of the morning came the strains of the *Marseillaise*, '*Aux armes, citoyens!*' and the subdued hum of the stirring bivouacs.

'Time, De Lancey, Time!'

'Would that we could stay, sir.'

'Pshaw, man, we must be off. We must find old Vorwärts and that Emperor, and wait on the other side for those who must join us this day. God knows, old comrade, there will be plenty of them. It is right they should find us waiting.'

As the sky reddened and the green grass brightened, the figures of the men of the old-time before faded out of the atmosphere and left the world to its present evil. The quiet morning was filling with the hum of movement increasing with the light like the growing roar of a forest fire.

And so on the morning of Waterloo, a century after, within a few miles of its scene, as the morning star faded into the sunrise, the men of the Empires of France and England surged out of their bivouacs side by side with intent to ensure that the Right should stand by itself once again, come weal, come woe.

'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.'

G. F. MACMUNN.

A GREAT SUCCESS.¹

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.

PART II.

CHAPTER III.

DURING the weeks that followed the Meadowses' first visit to Crosby Ledgers, Doris's conscience was by no means asleep on the subject of Lady Dunstable. She felt that her behaviour in that lady's house, and the sudden growth in her own mind of a quite unmanageable dislike, were not to be defended in one who prided herself on a general temper of coolness and common sense, who despised the rancour and whims of other women, hated scenes, and had always held jealousy to be the smallest and most degrading of passions. Why not laugh at what was odious, show oneself superior to personal slights—and enjoy what could be enjoyed? And above all, why grudge Arthur a woman friend?

None of these arguments, however, availed at all to reconcile Doris to the new intimacy growing under her eyes. The Dunstables came to town, and invitations followed. Mr. and Mrs. Meadows were asked to a large dinner-party, and Doris held her peace and went. She found herself at the end of a long table with an inarticulate schoolboy of seventeen, a ward of Lord Dunstable's, on her left, and with an elderly colonel on her right, who, after a little cool examination of her through an eyeglass, decided to devote himself to the *débutante* on his other side, a Lady Rosamond, who was ready to chatter hunting and horses to him through the whole of dinner. The girl was not pretty, but she was fresh and gay, and Doris, tired with 'much serving,' envied her spirits, her evident assumption that the world only existed for her to laugh and ride in, her childish unspoken claim to the best of everything—clothes, food, amusements, lovers. Doris on her side made valiant efforts with the schoolboy. She liked boys, and prided herself on getting on with them. But this specimen had no conversation—at any rate for the female sex—and apparently only an appetite. He

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ate steadily through the dinner, and seemed rather to resent Doris's attempts to distract him from the task. So that presently Doris found herself reduced to long tracts of silence, when her fan was her only companion, and the watching of other people her only amusement.

Lord and Lady Dunstable faced each other at the sides of the table, which was purposely narrow, so that talk could pass across it. Lady Dunstable sat between an Ambassador and a Cabinet Minister, but Meadows was almost directly opposite to her, and it seemed to be her chief business to make him the hero of the occasion. It was she who drew him into political or literary discussion with the Cabinet Minister, so that the neighbours of each stayed their own talk to listen; she who would insist on his repeating 'that story you told me at Crosby Ledgers,' who attacked him abruptly—rudely even, as she had done in the country—so that he might defend himself; and when he had slipped into all her traps one after the other, would fall back in her chair with a little satisfied smile. Doris, silent and forgotten, could not keep her eyes for long from the two distant figures—from this new Arthur, and the sallow-faced, dark-eyed witch who had waved her wand over him.

Wasn't she glad to see her husband courted—valued as he deserved—borne along the growing stream of fame? What matter, if she could only watch him from the bank?—and if the impetuous stream were carrying him away from her? No! She wasn't glad. Some cold and deadly thing seemed to be twining about her heart. Were they leaving the dear, poverty-stricken, debt-pestered life behind for ever, in which, after all, they had been so happy: she, everything to Arthur, and he, so dependent upon her? No doubt she had been driven to despair, often, by his careless, shiftless ways; she had thirsted for success and money; just money enough, at least, to get along with. And now success had come, and money was coming. And here she was, longing for the old, hard, struggling past—hating the advent of the new and glittering future. As she sat at Lady Dunstable's table, she seemed to see the little room in their Kensington house, with the big hole in the carpet, the piles of papers and books, the reading-lamp that would smoke, her work-basket, the house-books, Arthur pulling contentedly at his pipe, the fire crackling between them, his shabby coat, her shabby dress—

Bliss!—compared to this splendid scene, with the great Vandicks looking down on the dinner-table, the crowd of guests and servants, the costly food, the dresses, and the diamonds—with, in

the distance, *her* Arthur, divided, as it seemed, from her by a growing chasm, never remembering to throw her a look or a smile, drinking in a tide of flattery he would once have been the first to scorn, captured, exhibited, befooled by an unscrupulous, egotistical woman, who would drop him like a squeezed orange when he had ceased to amuse her. And the worst of it was that the woman was not a mere pretender! She had a fine, hard brain,—‘as good as Arthur’s—nearly—and he knows it. It is that which attracts him—and excites him. I can mend his socks; I can listen while he reads; and he used to like it when I praised. Now, what I say will never matter to him any more; that was just sentiment and nonsense; now, he only wants to know what *she* says;—that’s business! He writes with her in his mind—and when he has finished something he sends it off to her, straight. I may see it when all the world may—but she has the first-fruits!’

And in poor Doris’s troubled mind the whole scene—save the two central figures, Lady Dunstable and Arthur—seemed to melt away. She was not the first wife, by a long way, into whose quiet breast Lady Dunstable had dropped these seeds of discord. She knew it well by report; but it was hateful, both to wifely feeling and natural vanity, that *she* should now be the victim of the moment, and should know no more than her predecessors how to defend herself. ‘Why can’t I be cool and cutting—pay her back when she is rude, and contradict her when she’s absurd? She *is* absurd often. But I think of the right things to say just five minutes too late. I have no nerve—that’s the point!—only *l’esprit d’escalier*—to perfection. And she has been trained to this sort of campaigning from her babyhood. No good growling! I shall never hold my own!’

Then, into this despairing mood there dropped suddenly a fragment of her neighbour, the Colonel’s, conversation—‘Mrs. So-and-so? Impossible woman! Oh, one doesn’t mind seeing her graze occasionally at the other end of one’s table—as the price of getting her husband, don’t you know?—but—’

Doris’s sudden laugh at the Colonel’s elbow startled that gentleman so that he turned round to look at her. But she was absorbed in the menu, which she had taken up, and he could only suppose that something in it amused her.

A few days later arrived a letter for Meadows, which he handed to his wife in silence. There had been no further discussion of Lady Dunstable between them; only a general sense of friction,

warnings of hidden fire on Doris's side, and resentment on his, quite new in their relation to each other. Meadows clearly thought that his wife was behaving very badly. Lady Dunstable's efforts on his behalf had already done him substantial service; she had introduced him to all kinds of people likely to help him, intellectually and financially; and to help him was to help Doris. Why would she be such a little fool? So unlike her, too!—sensible, level-headed creature that she generally was. But he was afraid of losing his own temper, if he argued with her. And indeed his lazy easy goingness loathed argument of this domestic sort, loathed scenes, loathed doing anything disagreeable that could be put off.

But here was Lady Dunstable's letter:

'Dear Mr. Arthur,—Will your wife forgive me if I ask you to come to a tiny *men's* dinner-party next Friday at 8.15—to meet the President of the Duma, and another Russian, an intimate friend of Tolstoy's? All males, but myself! So I hope Mrs. Meadows will let you come.

'Yours sincerely,
RACHEL DUNSTABLE.'

'Of course, I won't go if you don't like it, Doris,' said Meadows with the smile of magnanimity.

'I thought you were angry with me—once—for even suggesting that you might!' Doris's tone was light, but not pleasing to a husband's ears. She was busy at the moment in packing up the American proofs of the Disraeli lecture, which at last with infinite difficulty she had persuaded Meadows to correct and return.

'Well—but of course—this is exceptional!' said Meadows, pacing up and down irresolutely.

'Everything's exceptional—in that quarter,' said Doris, in the same tone. 'Oh, go, of course!—it would be a thousand pities not to go.'

Meadows at once took her at her word. That was the first of a series of 'male' dinners, to which, however, it seemed to Doris, if one might judge from Arthur's accounts, that a good many female exceptions were admitted, no doubt by way of proving the rule. And during July, Meadows lunched in town—in the lofty regions of St. James's or Mayfair—with other enthusiastic women admirers, most of them endowed with long purses and long pedigrees, at least three or four times a week. Doris was occasionally asked and sometimes went. But she was suffering all the time from an

initial discouragement and depression, which took away self-reliance, and left her awkwardly conscious. She struggled, but in vain. The world into which Arthur was being so suddenly swept was strange to her, and in many ways antipathetic; but had she been happy and in spirits she could have grappled with it, or rather she could have lost herself in Arthur's success. Had she not always been his slave? But she was not happy! In their obscure days she had been Arthur's best friend, as well as his wife. And it was the old comradeship which was failing her; encroached upon, filched from her, by other women; and especially by this exacting, absorbing woman, whose craze for Arthur Meadows's society was rapidly becoming an amusement and a scandal even to those well acquainted with her previous records of the same sort.

The end of July arrived. The Dunstables left town. At a concert, for which she had herself sent them tickets, Lady Dunstable met Doris and her husband, the night before she departed.

'In ten days we shall expect you at Pitlochry,' she said, smiling, to Arthur Meadows, as she swept past them in the corridor. Then, pausing, she held out a perfunctory hand to Doris.

'And we really can't persuade you to come too?'

The tone was careless and patronising. It brought the sudden red to Doris's cheek. For one moment she was tempted to say—'Thank you—since you are so kind—after all, why not?'—just that she might see the change in those large, malicious eyes—might catch their owner unawares, for once. But, as usual, nerve failed her. She merely said that her drawing would keep her all August in town; and that London, empty, was the best possible place for work. Lady Dunstable nodded and passed on.

The ten days flew. Meadows, kept to it by Doris, was very busy preparing another lecture for publication in an English review. Doris, meanwhile, got his clothes ready, and affected a uniformly cheerful and indifferent demeanour. On Arthur's last evening at home, however, he came suddenly into the sitting-room, where Doris was sewing on some final buttons, and after fidgeting about a little, with occasional glances at his wife, he said abruptly:

'I say, Doris, I won't go if you're going to take it like this.'

She turned upon him.

'Like what?'

'Oh, don't pretend!' was the impatient reply. 'You know very well that you hate my going to Scotland!'

Doris, all on edge, and smarting under the too Jovian look and frown with which he surveyed her from the hearthrug, declared that, as it was not a case of her going to Scotland, but of his, she was entirely indifferent. If he enjoyed it, he was quite right to go. *She* was going to enjoy her work in Uncle Charles's studio.

Meadows broke out into an angry attack on her folly and unkindness. But the more he lost his temper, the more provokingly Doris kept hers. She sat there, surrounded by his socks and shirts, a trim, determined little figure—declining to admit that she was angry, or jealous, or offended, or anything of the kind. Would he please come upstairs and give her his last directions about his packing? She thought she had put everything ready; but there were just a few things she was doubtful about.

And all the time she seemed to be watching another Doris—a creature quite different from her real self. What had come over her? If anybody had told her beforehand that she could ever let slip her power over her own will like this, ever become possessed with this silent, obstinate demon of wounded love and pride, never would she have believed them! She moved under its grip like an automaton. She would not quarrel with Arthur. But as no soft confession was possible, and no mending or undoing of what had happened, to laugh her way through the difficult hours was all that remained. So that whenever Meadows renewed the attempt to 'have it out,' he was met by renewed evasion and 'chaff' on Doris's side, till he could only retreat with as much offended dignity as she allowed him.

It was after midnight before she had finished his packing. Then, bidding him a smiling good night, she fell asleep—apparently—as soon as her head touched the pillow.

The next morning, early, she stood on the steps waving farewell to Arthur, without a trace of ill-humour. And he, though vaguely uncomfortable, had submitted at last to what he felt was her fixed purpose of avoiding a scene. Moreover, the 'eternal child' in him, which made both his charm and his weakness, had already scattered his compunctions of the preceding day, and was now aglow with the sheer joy of holiday and change. He had worked very hard, he had had a great success, and now he was going to live for three weeks in the lap of luxury; intellectual luxury first and foremost—good talk, good company, an abundance of books for rainy days; but with the addition of a supreme *chef*, Lord Dunstable's champagne, and all the amenities of one of the best moors in Scotland.

Doris went back into the house, and, Arthur being no longer in the neighbourhood, allowed herself a few tears. She had never felt so lonely in her life, nor so humiliated. 'My moral character is gone,' she said to herself. 'I have no moral character. I thought I was a sensible, educated woman; and I am just an "Arriet," in a temper with her "Arry." Well—courage! Three weeks isn't long. Who can say that Arthur mayn't come back disillusioned? Rachel Dunstable is a born tyrant. If, instead of flattering him, she begins to bully him, strange things may happen!'

The first week of solitude she spent in household drudgery. Bills had to be paid, and there was now mercifully a little money to pay them with. Though it was August, the house was to be 'spring-cleaned,' and Doris had made a compact with her sulky maids that when it began she would do no more than sleep and breakfast at home. She would spend her days in the Campden Hill studio, and sup on a tray—anywhere. On these terms, they grudgingly allowed her to occupy her own house.

The studio in which she worked was on the top of Campden Hill, and opened into one of the pleasant gardens of that neighbourhood. Her uncle, Charles Bentley, an elderly Academician, with an ugly, humorous face, red hair, red eyebrows, a black skull-cap, and a general weakness for the female sex, was very fond of his niece Doris, and inclined to think her a neglected and underrated wife. He was too fond of his own comfort, however, to let Meadows perceive this opinion of his; still less did he dare express it to Doris. All he could do was to befriend her and make her welcome at the studio, to advise her about her illustrations, and correct her drawing when it needed it. He himself was an old-fashioned artist, quite content to be 'mid' or even 'early' Victorian. He still cultivated the art of historical painting, and was still as anxious as any contemporary of Frith to tell a story. And as his manner was no less behind the age than his material, his pictures remained on his hands, while the 'vicious horrors,' as they seemed to him, of the younger school, held the field and captured the newspapers. But as he had some private means, and no kith or kin, the indifference of the public to his work caused him little disturbance. He pleased his own taste, allowing himself a good-natured contempt for the work which supplanted him, coupled with an ever-generous hand for any post-Impressionist in difficulties.

On the August afternoon when Doris, escaping at last from

her maids and her accounts, made her way up to the studio, for some hours' work on the last three or four illustrations wanted for a Christmas book, Uncle Charles welcomed her with effusion.

'Where have you been, child, all this time? I thought you must have fittied entirely.'

Doris explained—while she set up her easel—that for the first time in their lives she and Arthur had been seeing something of the great world, and—mildly—'doing' the season. Arthur was now continuing the season in Scotland, while she had stayed at home to work and rest. Throughout her talk, she avoided mentioning the Dunstables.

'H'm!' said Uncle Charles, 'so you've been junketing?'

Doris admitted it.

'Did you like it?'

Doris put on her candid look.

'I daresay I should have liked it, if I'd made a success of it. Of course Arthur did.'

'Too much trouble!' said the old painter, shaking his head. 'I was in the swim, as they call it, for a year or two. I might have stayed there, I suppose, for I could always tell a story, and I wasn't afraid of the big-wigs. But I couldn't stand it. Dress-clothes are the deuce! And besides, talk now is not what it used to be. The clever men who can say smart things are too clever to say them. Nobody wants 'em! So let's 'cultivate our garden,' my dear, and be thankful. I'm beginning a new picture—and I've found a topping new model. What can a man want more? Very nice of you to let Arthur go, and have his head. Where is it?—some smart moor? He'll soon be tired of it.'

Doris laughed, let the question as to the 'smart moor' pass, and came round to look at the new subject that Uncle Charles was laying in. He explained it to her, well knowing that he spoke to unsympathetic ears, for whatever Doris might draw for her publishers, she was a passionate and humble follower of those modern experimentalists who have made the Slade School famous. The subject was, it seemed, to be a visit paid to Joanna the mad and widowed mother of Charles V., at Tordesillas, by the envoys of Henry VII., who were thus allowed by Ferdinand, the Queen's father, to convince themselves that the Queen's profound melancholia formed an insuperable barrier to the marriage proposals of the English King. The figure of the distracted Queen, crouching in white beside a window from which she could see the tomb of her

dead and adored husband, the Archduke Philip, and some of the splendid figures of the English embassy, were already sketched.

'I have been fit to hang myself over her!' said Bentley, pointing to the Queen. 'I tried model after model. At last I've got the very thing! She comes to-day for the first time. You'll see her! Before she comes, I must scrape out Joanna, so as to look at the thing quite fresh. But I daresay I shall only make a few sketches of the lady to-day.'

'Who is she, and where did you get her?'

Bentley laughed. 'You won't like her, my dear! Never mind. Her appearance is magnificent—whatever her mind and morals may be.'

And he described how he had heard of the lady from an artist friend who had originally seen her at a music-hall, and had persuaded her to come and sit to him. The comic haste and relief with which he had now transferred her to Bentley lost nothing in Bentley's telling. Of course she had 'a fiend of a temper.' 'Wish you joy of her! Oh, don't ask me about her! You'll find out for yourself.' 'I can manage her,' said Uncle Charles tranquilly. 'I've had so many of 'em.'

'She is Spanish?'

'Not at all. She is Italian. That is to say, her mother was a Neapolitan, the daughter of a jeweller in Hatton Garden, and her father an English bank clerk! The Neapolitans have a lot of Spanish blood in them—hence, no doubt, the physique.'

'And she is a professional model?'

'Nothing of the sort!—though she will probably become one. She is a writer—Heaven save the mark!—and I have to pay her vast sums to get her. It is the greatest favour.'

'A writer?'

'Poetess!—and journalist!' said Uncle Charles, enjoying Doris's puzzled look. 'She sent me her poems yesterday. As to journalism'—his eyes twinkled—'I say nothing—but this. Watch her *hats*! She has the reputation—in certain circles—of being the best-hatted woman in London. All this I get from the man who handed her on to me. As I said to him, it depends on what 'London' you mean.'

'Married?'

'Oh dear no, though of course she calls herself "Madame" like the rest of them—Madame Vavasour. I have reason, however, to believe that her real name is Flink—Elena Flink. And I

should say—very much on the look-out for a husband ; and meanwhile very much courted by boys—who go to what she calls her “evenings.” It is odd, the taste that some youths have for these elderly Circes.’

‘Elderly?’ said Doris, busy the while with her own preparations. ‘I was hoping for something young and beautiful!’

‘Young?—no!—an unmistakable thirty-five. Beautiful? Well, wait till you see her . . . H’m—that shoulder won’t do!’—Doris had just placed a preliminary sketch of one of her ‘subjects’ under his eyes—and that bit of perspective in the corner wants a lot of seeing to. Look here!’ The old Academician, brought up in the spirit of Ingres—‘le dessein, c’est la probité!—le dessein, c’est l’honneur!’—fell eagerly to work on the sketch, and Doris watched.

They were both absorbed, when there was a knock at the door. Doris turned hastily, expecting to see the model. Instead of which there entered, in response to Bentley’s ‘Come in!’ a girl of four or five and twenty, in a blue linen dress and a shady hat, who nodded a quiet ‘Good afternoon’ to the artist, and proceeded at once with an air of business to a writing-table at the further end of the studio, covered with papers.

‘Miss Wigram,’ said the artist, raising his voice, ‘let me introduce you to my niece, Mrs. Meadows.’

The girl rose from her chair again and bowed. Then Doris saw that she had a charming tired face, beautiful eyes on which she had just placed spectacles, and soft brown hair framing her thin cheeks.

‘A novelty since you were here,’ whispered Bentley in Doris’s ear. ‘She’s an accountant—capital girl! Since these Liberal budgets came along, I can’t keep my own accounts, or send in my own income-tax returns—dash them! So she does the whole business for me—pays everything—sees to everything—comes once a week. We shall all be run by the women soon!’

The studio had grown very quiet. Through some glass doors open to the garden came in little wandering winds which played with some loose papers on the floor, and blew Doris’s hair about her eyes as she stooped over her easel, absorbed in her drawing. Apparently absorbed: her subliminal mind, at least, was far away, wandering on a craggy Scotch moor. A lady on a Scotch pony—she understood that Lady Dunstable often rode with the shooters—

and a tall man walking beside her, carrying, not a gun, but a walking stick :—that was the vision in the crystal. Arthur was too bad a shot to be tolerated in the Dunstable circle ; had indeed wisely announced from the beginning that he was not to be included among the guns. All the more time for conversation, the give and take of wits, the pleasures of the intellectual tilting-ground ; the whole watered by good wine, seasoned with the best of cooking, and lapped in the general ease of a house where nobody ever thought of such a vulgar thing as money except to spend it.

Doris had in general a severe mind as to the rich and aristocratic classes. Her own hard and thrifty life had disposed her to see them *en noir*. But the sudden rush of a certain section of them to crowd Arthur's lectures had been certainly mollifying. If it had not been for the Vampire, Doris was well aware that her standards might have given way. As it was, Lady Dunstable's exacting ways, her swoop, straight and fierce, on the social morsel she desired, like that of an eagle on the sheepfold, had made her, in Doris's sore consciousness, the representative of thousands more ; all greedy, able, domineering, inevitably getting what they wanted, and more than they deserved ; against whom the starved and virtuous intellectuals of the professional classes were bound to contend to the death. The story of that poor girl, that clergyman's daughter, for instance—could anything have been more insolent—more cruel ? Doris burned to avenge her.

Suddenly—a great clatter and noise in the passage leading from the small house behind to the studio and garden.

'Here she is !'

Uncle Charles sprang up, and reached the studio door just as a shower of knocks descended upon it from outside. He opened it, and on the threshold there stood two persons ; a stout lady in white, surmounted by a huge black hat with a hearse-like array of plumes ; and, behind her, a tall and willowy youth, with—so far as could be seen through the chinks of the hat—a large nose, fair hair, pale blue eyes, and a singular deficiency of chin. He carried in his arms a tiny black Spitz with a pink ribbon round its neck.

The lady looked, frowning, into the interior of the studio. She held in her hand a very large fan, with the handle of which she had been rapping the door ; and the black feathers with which she was canopied seemed to be nodding in her eyes.

'Maestro, you are not alone !' she said in a deep, reproachful voice.

'My niece, Mrs. Meadows—Madame Vavasour,' said Bentley, ushering in the new-comer.

Doris turned from her easel and bowed, only to receive a rather scowling response.

'And your friend?' As he spoke the artist looked blandly at the young man.

'I brought him to amuse me, Maestro. When I am dull my countenance changes, and you cannot do it justice. He will talk to me—I shall be animated—and you will profit.'

'Ah, no doubt!' said Bentley, smiling. 'And your friend's name?'

'Herbert Dunstable—Honourable Herbert Dunstable!—Signor Bentley,' said Madame Vavasour, advancing with a stately step into the room, and waving peremptorily to the young man to follow.

Doris sat transfixed and staring. Bentley turned to look at his niece, and their eyes met—his full of suppressed mirth. The son!—the unsatisfactory son! Doris remembered that his name was Herbert. In the train of this third-rate sorceress!

Her thoughts ran excitedly to the distant moors, and that magnificent lady, with her circle of distinguished persons, holiday-making statesmen, peers, diplomats, writers, and the like. Here was a humbler scene! But Doris's fancy at once divined a score of links between it and the high comedy yonder.

Meanwhile, at the name of Dunstable, the girl accountant in the distance had also moved sharply, so as to look at the young man. But in the bustle of Madame Vavasour's entrance, and her passage to the sitter's chair, the girl's gesture passed unnoticed.

'I'm just worn out, Maestro!' said the model languidly, uplifting a pair of tragic eyes to the artist. 'I sat up half the night writing. I had a subject which tormented me. But I have done something *splendid*! Isn't it splendid, Herbert?'

'Ripping!' said the young man, grinning widely.

'Sit down!' said Madame, with a change of tone. And the youth sat down, on the very low chair to which she pointed him, doing his best to dispose of his long legs.

'Give me the dog!' she commanded. 'You have no idea how to hold him—poor lamb!'

The dog was handed to her; she took off her enormous hat with many sighs of fatigue, and then, with the dog on her lap, asked how she was to sit. Bentley explained that he wished to make a few

preliminary sketches of her head and bust, and proceeded to pose her. She accepted his directions with a curious pettishness, as though they annoyed her; and presently complained loudly that the chair was uncomfortable, and the pose irksome. He handled her, however, with a good-humoured mixture of flattery and persuasion, and at last, stepping back, surveyed the result—well content.

There was no doubt whatever that she was a very handsome woman, and that her physical type—that of the more lethargic and heavily-built Neapolitan—suggested very happily the mad and melancholy Queen. She had superb black hair, eyes profoundly dark, a low and beautiful brow, lips classically fine, a powerful head and neck, and a complexion which, but for the treatment given it, would have been of a clear and beautiful olive. She wore a draggled dress of cream-coloured muslin, very transparent over the shoulders, somewhat scandalously wanting at the throat and breast, and very frayed and dirty round the skirt. Her feet, which were large and plump, were cased in extremely pointed shoes with large paste buckles; and as she crossed them on the stool provided for them she showed a considerable amount of rather clumsy ankle. The hands too were large, common, and ill-kept, and the wrists laden with bracelets. She was adorned indeed with a great deal of jewellery, including some startling earrings of a bright green stone. The hat, which she had carefully placed on a chair beside her, was truly a monstrosity!—but, as Doris guessed, an expensive monstrosity, such as the Rue de la Paix provides, at anything from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty francs, for those of its cosmopolitan customers whom it pillages and despises. How did the lady afford it? The rest of her dress suggested a struggle with small means, waged by one who was greedy for effect, obtained at a minimum of trouble. That she was rouged and powdered goes without saying.

And the young man? Doris perceived at once his likeness to his father—a feeble likeness. But he was evidently simple and good-natured, and to all appearance completely in the power of the enchantress. He fanned her assiduously. He picked up all the various belongings—gloves, handkerchiefs, handbag, which she perpetually let fall. He ran after the dog whenever it escaped from the lady's lap and threatened mischief in the studio; and by way of amusing her—the purpose for which he had been imported—he kept up a stream of small cryptic gossip about various common

acquaintances, most of whom seemed to belong to the music-hall profession, and to be either 'stars' or the satellites of 'stars.' Madame listened to him with avidity, and occasionally broke into a giggling laugh. She had, however, two manners, and two kinds of conversation, which she adopted with the young man and the Academician respectively. Her talk with the youth suggested the jealous ascendancy of a coarse-minded woman. She occasionally flattered him, but more generally she teased or 'ragged' him. She seemed indeed to feel him securely in her grip; so that there was no need to pose for him, as—figuratively as well as physically—she posed for Bentley. To the artist she gave her opinions on pictures or books—on the novels of Mr. Wells, or the plays of Mr. Bernard Shaw—in the languid or drawling tone of accepted authority; dropping every now and then into a broad cockney accent, which produced a startling effect, like that of unexpected garlic in cookery. Bentley's gravity was often severely tried, and Doris altered the position of her own easel so that he and she could not see each other. Meanwhile Madame took not the smallest notice of Mr. Bentley's niece, and Doris made no advances to the young man, to whom her name was clearly quite unknown. Had Circe really got him in her toils? Doris judged him soft-headed and soft-hearted; no match at all for the lady. The thought of her walking the lawns or the drawing-rooms of Crosby Ledgers as the betrothed of the heir stirred in Arthur Meadows's wife a silent, and—be it confessed!—a malicious convulsion. Such mothers, so self-centred, so set on their own triumphs, with their intellectual noses so very much in the clouds, deserved such sons! She promised herself to keep her own counsel, and watch the play.

The sitting lasted for two hours. When it was over, Uncle Charles, all smiles and satisfaction, went with his visitors to the front door.

He was away some little time, and returned, bubbling, to the studio.

'She's been cross-examining me about her poems! I had to confess I hadn't read a word of them. And now she's offered to recite next time she comes! Good Heavens—how can I get out of it? I believe, Doris, she's hooked that young idiot! She told me she was engaged to him. Do you know anything of his people?'

The girl accountant suddenly came forward. She looked flushed and distressed.

'I do!' she said, with energy. 'Can't somebody stop that? It will break their hearts!'

Doris and Uncle Charles looked at her in amazement.

'Whose hearts?' said the painter.

'Lord and Lady Dunstable's.'

'You know them?' exclaimed Doris.

'I used to know them—quite well,' said the girl, quietly. 'My father had one of Lord Dunstable's livings. He died last year. He didn't like Lady Dunstable. He quarrelled with her, because—because she once did a very rude thing to me. But this would be *too* awful! And poor Lord Dunstable! Everybody likes him. Oh—it must be stopped!—it *must*!'

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Doris reached home that evening, the little Kensington house, with half its carpets up and all but two of its rooms under dust-sheets, looked particularly lonely and unattractive. Arthur's study was unrecognisable. No cheerful litter anywhere. No smell of tobacco, no sign of a male presence! Doris, walking restlessly from room to room, had never felt so forsaken, so dismally certain that the best of life was done. Moreover, she had fully expected to find a letter from Arthur waiting for her; and there was nothing.

It was positively comic that under such circumstances anybody should expect her—Doris Meadows—to trouble her head about Lady Dunstable's affairs. Of course she would feel it if her son made a ridiculous and degrading marriage. But why not?—why shouldn't he come to grief like anybody else's son? Why should heaven and earth be moved in order to prevent it?—especially by the woman to whose possible jealousy and pain Lady Dunstable had certainly never given the most passing thought.

All the same, the distress shown by that odd girl Miss Wigram, and her appeal both to the painter and his niece to intervene and save the foolish youth, kept echoing in Doris's memory, although neither she nor Bentley had received it with any cordiality. Doris had soon made out that this girl, Alice Wigram, was indeed the clergyman's daughter whom Lady Dunstable had snubbed so unkindly some twelve months before. She was evidently a sweet-natured, susceptible creature, to whom Lord Dunstable

had taken a fancy, in his fatherly way, during occasional visits to her father's rectory, and of whom he had spoken to his wife. That Lady Dunstable should have unkindly slighted this motherless girl, who had evidently plenty of natural capacity under her shyness, was just like her, and Doris's feelings of antagonism to the tyrant were only sharpened by her acquaintance with the victim. Why should Miss Wigram worry herself? Lord Dunstable? Well, but after all, capable men should keep such wives in order. If Lord Dunstable had not been scandalously weak, Lady Dunstable would not have become a terror to her sex.

As for Uncle Charles, he had simply declined all responsibility in the matter. He had never seen the Dunstables, wouldn't know them from Adam, and had no concern whatever in what happened to their son. The situation merely excited in him one man's natural amusement at the folly of another. The boy was more than of age. Really he and his mother must look after themselves. To meddle with the young man's love affairs, simply because he happened to visit your studio in the company of a lady, would be outrageous. So the painter laughed, shook his head, and went back to his picture. Then Miss Wigram, looking despondently from the silent Doris to the artist at work, had said with sudden energy, 'I must find out about her! I'm—I'm sure she's a horrid woman! Can you tell me, sir'—she addressed Bentley—'the name of the gentleman who was painting her before she came here?'

Bentley had hummed and hawed a little, twisting his red moustache, and finally had given the name and address; whereupon Miss Wigram had gathered up her papers, some of which had drifted to the floor between her table and Doris's easel, and had taken an immediate departure, a couple of hours before her usual time, throwing, as she left the studio, a wistful and rather puzzled look at Mrs. Meadows.

Doris congratulated herself that she had kept her own counsel on the subject of the Dunstables, both with Uncle Charles and Miss Wigram. Neither of them had guessed that she had any personal acquaintance with them. She tried now to put the matter out of her thoughts. Jane brought in a tray for her mistress, and Doris supped meagrely in Arthur's deserted study, thinking, as the sunset light came in across the dusty street, of that flame and splendour which such weather must be kindling on the moors, of the blue and purple distances, the glens of rocky mountains hung in

air, 'the gleam, the shadow, and the peace supreme'! She remembered how on their September honeymoon they had wandered in Ross-shire, how the whole land was dyed crimson by the heather, and how impossible it was to persuade Arthur to walk discreetly rather than, like any cockney tripper, with his arm round his sweetheart. Scotland had not been far behind the Garden of Eden under those circumstances. But Arthur was now pursuing the higher, the intellectual joys.

She finished her supper, and then sat down to write to her husband. Was she going to tell him anything about the incident of the afternoon? Why should she? Why should she give him the chance of becoming more than ever Lady Dunstable's friend—pegging out an eternal claim upon her gratitude?

Doris wrote her letter. She described the progress of the spring cleaning; she reported that her sixth illustration was well forward, and that Uncle Charles was wrestling with another historical picture, a *machine* neither better nor worse than all the others. She thought that after all Jane would soon give warning; and she, Doris, had spent three pounds in petty cash since he went away; how, she could not remember, but it was all in her account book.

And she concluded:

'I understand then that we meet at Crewe on Friday fortnight? I have heard of a lodging near Capel Curig which sounds delightful. We might do a week's climbing and then go on to the sea. I really *shall* want a holiday. Has there not been ten minutes even—since you arrived—to write a letter in?—or a postcard? Shall I send you a few addressed?'

Having thus finished what seemed to her the dullest letter she had ever written in her life, she looked at it a while, irresolutely, then put it in an envelope hastily, addressed, stamped it, and rang the bell for Jane to run across the street with it and post it. After which, she sat idle a little while with flushed cheeks, while the twilight gathered.

The gate of the trim front garden swung on its hinges. Doris turned to look. She saw, to her astonishment, that the girl-accountant of the morning, Miss Wigram, was coming up the flagged path to the house. What could she want?

'Oh, Mrs. Meadows—I'm so sorry to disturb you—' said the visitor, in some agitation, as Doris, summoned by Jane, entered the

dust-sheeted drawing-room. 'But you dropped an envelope with an address this afternoon. I picked it up with some of my papers and never discovered it till I got home.'

She held out the envelope. Doris took it, and flushed vividly. It was the envelope with his Scotch address which Arthur had written out for her before leaving home—'care of the Lord Dunstable, Franick Castle, Pitlochry, Perthshire, N.B.' She had put it in her portfolio, out of which it had no doubt slipped while she was at work.

She and Miss Wigram eyed each other. The girl was evidently agitated. But she seemed not to know how to begin what she had to say.

Doris broke the silence.

'You were astonished to find that I know the Dunstables?'

'Oh, no!—I—I didn't think—' stammered her visitor—'I supposed some friend of yours might be staying there.'

'My husband is staying there,' said Doris, quietly. Really it was too much trouble to tell a falsehood. Her pride refused.

'Oh, I see!' cried Miss Wigram, though in fact she was more bewildered than before. Why should this extraordinary little lady have behaved at the studio as if she had never heard of the Dunstables, and be now confessing that her husband was actually staying in their house?

Doris smiled—with perfect self-possession.

'Please sit down. You think it odd, of course, that I didn't tell you I knew the Dunstables, while we were talking about them. The fact is I didn't want to be mixed up with the affair at all. We have only lately made acquaintance with the Dunstables. Lady Dunstable is my husband's friend. I don't like her very much. But neither of us knows her well enough to go and tell her tales about her son.'

Miss Wigram considered—her gentle, troubled eyes bent upon Doris. 'Of course—I know—how many people dislike Lady Dunstable. She did a—rather cruel thing to me once. The thought of it humiliated and discouraged me for a long time. It made me almost glad to leave home. And of course she hasn't won Mr. Herbert's confidence at all. She has always snubbed and disapproved of him. Oh, I knew him very little. I have hardly ever spoken to him. You saw he didn't recognise me this afternoon. But my father used to go over to Crosby Ledgers to coach him in the holidays, and he often told me that as a boy

he was *terrified* of his mother. She either took no notice of him at all, or she was always sneering at him, and scolding him. As soon as ever he came of age and got a little money of his own, he declared he wouldn't live at home. His father wanted him to go into Parliament or the army, but he said he hated the army, and if he was such a dolt as his mother thought him it would be ridiculous to attempt politics. And so he just drifted up to town and looked out for people that would make much of him, and wouldn't snub him. And that, of course, was how he got into the toils of a woman like that !'

The girl threw up her hands tragically.

Doris sat up, with energy.

'But what on earth,' she said, 'does it matter to you or to me ?'

'Oh, can't you see ?' said the other, flushing deeply, and with the tears in her eyes. 'My father had one of Lord Dunstable's livings. We lived on that estate for years. Everybody loved Lord Dunstable. And though Lady Dunstable makes enemies, there's a great respect for the *family*. They've been there since Queen Elizabeth's time. And it's *dreadful* to think of a woman like—well, like that !—reigning at Crosby Ledgers. I think of the poor people. Lady Dunstable's good to them ; though of course you wouldn't hear anything about it, unless you lived there. She tries to do her duty to them—she really does—in her own way. And, of course, they *respect* her. No Dunstable has ever done anything disgraceful ! Isn't there something in "*Noblesse oblige*" ? Think of this woman at the head of that estate !'

'Well, upon my word,' said Doris, after a pause, 'you *are* feudal. Don't you feel yourself that you are old-fashioned ?'

Mrs. Meadows's half-sarcastic look at first intimidated her visitor, and then spurred her into further attempts to explain herself.

'I daresay it's old-fashioned,' she said slowly, 'but I'm sure it's what father would have felt. Anyway, I went off to try and find out what I could. I went first to a little club I belong to—for professional women—near the Strand, and I asked one or two women I found there—who know artists—and models—and write for papers. And very soon I found out a great deal. I didn't have to go to the man whose address Mr. Bentley gave me. Madame Vavasour is a horrid woman ! This is not the first young man she's fleeced—by a long way. There was a man—younger than Mr. Dunstable, a boy of nineteen—three years

ago. She got him to promise to marry her; and the parents came down, and paid her enormously to let him go. Now she's got through all that money, and she boasts she's going to marry young Dunstable before his parents know anything about it. She's going to make sure of a peerage this time. Oh, she's odious! She's greedy, she's vulgar, she's false! And of course—the girl's eyes grew wide and scared—'there may be other things much worse. How do we know?'

'How do we know indeed!' said Doris, with a shrug. 'Well!'—she turned her eyes full upon her guest—'and what are you going to do?'

An eager look met hers.

'Couldn't you—couldn't you write to Mr. Meadows, and ask him to warn Lady Dunstable?'

Doris shook her head.

'Why don't you do it yourself?'

The girl flushed uncomfortably. 'You see, father quarrelled with her about that unkind thing she did to me—oh, it isn't worth telling!—but he wrote her an angry letter, and they never spoke afterwards. Lady Dunstable never forgives that kind of thing. If people find fault with her, she just drops them. I don't believe she'd read a letter from me!'

'*Les offensés*, etc.,' said Doris, meditating. 'But what are the facts? Has the boy actually promised to marry her? She may have been telling lies to my uncle.'

'She tells everybody so. I saw a girl who knows her quite well. They write for the same paper—it's a fashion paper. You saw that hat, by the way, she had on? She gets them as perquisites from the smart shops she writes about. She has a whole cupboard of them at home, and when she wants money she sells them for what she can get. Well, she told me that Madame—they all call her Madame, though they all know quite well that she's not married, and that her name is Flink—boasts perpetually of her engagement. It seems that he was ill in the winter—in his lodgings. His mother knew nothing about it—he wouldn't tell her, and Madame nursed him, and made a fuss of him. And Mr. Dunstable thought he owed her a great deal—and she made scenes and told him she had compromised herself by coming to nurse him—and all that kind of nonsense. And at last he promised to marry her—in writing. And now she's so sure of him that she just bullies him—you saw how she ordered him about to-day.'

'Well, why doesn't he marry her, if he's such a fool—why hasn't he married her long ago?' cried Doris.

Miss Wigram looked distressed.

'I don't know. My friend thinks it's his father. She believes, at least, that he doesn't want to get married without telling Lord Dunstable; and that, of course, means telling his mother. And he hates the thought of the letters and the scenes. So he keeps it hanging on; and lately Madame has been furious with him, and is always teasing and sniffing at him. He's dreadfully weak, and my friend's afraid that before he's made up his own mind what to do that woman will have carried him off to a registry office—and got the horrid thing done for good and all.'

There was silence a moment. After which Doris said, with a cold decision:

'You can't imagine how absurd it seems to me that you should come and ask me to help Lady Dunstable with her son. There is nobody in the world less helpless than Lady Dunstable, and nobody who would be less grateful for being helped. I really cannot meddle with it.'

She rose as she spoke, and Miss Wigram rose too.

'Couldn't you—couldn't you—' said the girl pleadingly—'just ask Mr. Meadows to warn Lord Dunstable? I'm thinking of the villagers, and the farmers, and the schools—all the people we used to love. Father was there twenty years! To think of the dear place given over—some day—to that creature!'

Her charming eyes actually filled with tears. Doris was touched, but at the same time set on edge. This loyalty that people born and bred in the country feel to our English country system—what an absurd and unreal frame of mind! And when our country system produces Lady Dunstables!

'They have such a pull!'—she thought angrily—'such a hideously unfair pull, over other people! The way everybody rushes to help them when they get into a mess—to pick up the pieces—and sweep it all up! It's irrational—it's sickening! Let them look after themselves—and pay for their own misdeeds like the rest of us.'

'I can't interfere—I really can't!' she said, straightening her slim shoulders. 'It is not as though we were old friends of Lord and Lady Dunstable. Don't you see how very awkward it would be? Let me advise you just to watch the thing a little, and then to apply to somebody in the Crosby Ledgers neighbourhood. You

must have some friends or acquaintances there, who at any rate could do more than we could. And perhaps after all it's a mare's nest, and the young man doesn't mean to marry her at all !'

The girl's anxious eyes scanned Doris's unyielding countenance ; then with a sigh she gave up her attempt, and said ' Good-bye.' Doris went with her to the door.

' We shall meet to-morrow, shan't we ? ' she said, feeling a vague compunction. ' And I suppose this woman will be there again. You can keep an eye on her. Are you living alone—or are you with friends ? '

' Oh, I'm in a boarding-house,' said Miss Wigram, hastily. Then as though she recognised the new softness in Doris's look, she added, ' I'm quite comfortable there—and I've a great deal of work. Good night.'

' All alone !—with that gentle face—and that terrible amount of conscience—hard lines ! ' thought Doris, as she reflected on her visitor. ' I felt a black imp beside her ! '

All the same, the letter which Mrs. Meadows received by the following morning's post was not at all calculated to melt the ' black imp ' further. Arthur wrote in a great hurry to beg that she would not go on with their Welsh plans—for the moment.

' Lady D—— has insisted on my going on a short yachting cruise with her and Miss Field, the week after next. She wants to show me the West Coast, and they have a small cottage in the Shetlands where we should stay a night or two and watch the sea-birds. It *may* keep me away another week or fortnight, but you won't mind, dear, will you ? I am getting famously rested, and really the house is very agreeable. In these surroundings Lady Dunstable is less of the *bas-bleu*, and more of the woman. You *must* make up your mind to come another year ! You would soon get over your prejudice and make friends with her. She looks after us all—she talks brilliantly—and I haven't seen her rude to anybody since I arrived. There are some very nice people here, and altogether I am enjoying it. Don't you work too hard—and don't let the servants harry you. Post just going. Good night ! '

Another week or fortnight !—five weeks, or nearly, altogether. Doris was sorely wounded. She went to look at herself in the mirror over the chimney-piece. Was she not thin and haggard for want of rest and holiday ? Would not the summer weather be all done by the time Arthur graciously condescended to come back to her ?

Were there not dark lines under her eyes, and was she not feeling a limp and wretched creature, unfit for any exertion? What was wrong with her? She hated her drawing—she hated everything. And there was Arthur, proposing to go yachting with Lady Dunstable!—while she might toil and moil—all alone—in this August London! The tears rushed into her eyes. Her pride only just saved her from a childish fit of crying.

But in the end resentment came to her aid, together with an angry and redoubled curiosity as to what might be happening to Lady Dunstable's precious son while Lady Dunstable was thus absorbed in robbing other women of their husbands. Doris hurried her small household affairs, that she might get off early to the studio; and as she put on her hat, her fancy drew vindictive pictures of the scene which any day might realise—the scene at Franick Castle, when Lady Dunstable, unsuspecting, should open the letter which announced to her the advent of her daughter-in-law, Elena, *née* Flink—or should gather the same unlovely fact from a casual newspaper paragraph. As for interfering between her and her rich deserts, Doris vowed to herself she would not lift a finger. That incredibly forgiving young woman, Miss Wigram, might do as she pleased. But when a mother pursues her own selfish ends so as to make her only son dislike and shun her, let her take what comes. It was in the mood of an Erinny that Doris made her way northwards to Campden Hill, and nobody perceiving the slight erect figure in the corner of the omnibus could possibly have guessed at the storm within.

The August day was hot and lifeless. Heat mist lay over the park, and over the gardens on the slopes of Campden Hill. Doris could hardly drag her weary feet along, as she walked from where the omnibus had set her down to her uncle's studio. But it was soon evident that within the studio itself there was animation enough. From the long passage approaching it Doris heard someone shouting—declaiming—what appeared to be verse. Madame, of course, reciting her own poems—poor Uncle Charles! Doris stopped outside the door, which was slightly open, to listen, and heard these astonishing lines—delivered very slowly and pompously, in a thick, strained voice:

'My heart is adamant! The tear-drops drip and drip—
Force their slow path, and tear their desperate way.
The vulture Pain sits close, to snip—and snip—and snip
My sad, sweet life to ruin—well-a-day!

I am deceived—a bleating lamb bereft!—who goes
 Baa-baaing to the moon o'er lonely lands.
 Through all my shivering veins a tender fervour flows;
 I cry to Love—"Reach out, my Lord, thy hands!"

And save me from these ugly beasts who ramp and rage
 Around me all day long—beasts fell and sore—
 Envy, and Hate, and Calumny!—do thou assuage
 Their impious mouths, O splendid Love, and floor
 Their hideous tactics, and their noisome spleen,
 Withering to dust the awful 'Might-Have-Been!' ”

'Goodness! "Howls the Sublime" indeed!' thought Doris, gurgling with laughter in the passage. As soon as she had steadied her face she opened the studio door, and perceived Lady Dunstable's prospective daughter-in-law standing in the middle of the studio, head thrown back and hands outstretched, invoking the Cyprian. The shriek of the first lines had died away in a stage whisper; the reciter was glaring fiercely into vacancy.

Doris's merry eyes devoured the scene. On the chair from which the model had risen she had deposited yet another hat, so large, so audacious and beplumed that it seemed to have a positive personality, a positive swagger of its own, and to be winking roguishly at the audience. Meanwhile Madame's muslin dress of the day before had been exchanged for something more appropriate to the warmth of her poetry—a tawdry flame-coloured satin, in which her 'too, too solid' frame was tightly sheathed. Her coal-black hair, tragically wild, looked as though no comb had been near it for a month, and the gloves drawn half-way up the bare arms hardly remembered they had ever been white.

A slovenly, dishevelled, vulgar woman, reciting bombastic nonsense! And yet!—a touch of Southern magnificence, even of Southern grace, amid the cockney squalor and finery. Doris coolly recognised it, as she stood, herself invisible, behind her uncle's large easel. Thence she perceived also the other persons in the studio:—Bentley sitting in front of the poetess, hiding his eyes with one hand, and nervously tapping the arm of his chair with the other; to the right of him—seen sideways—the lanky form, flushed face, and open mouth of young Dunstable; and in the far distance, Miss Wigram.

Then—a surprising thing! The awkward pause following the recitation was suddenly broken by a loud and uncontrollable

laugh. Doris, startled, turned to look at young Dunstable. For it was he who had laughed. Madame also shook off her stage trance to look—a thunderous frown upon her handsome face. The young man laughed on—laughed hysterically—burying his face in his hands. Madame Vavasour—all attitudes thrown aside—ran up to him in a fury.

‘Why are you laughing? You insult me!—you have done it before. And now before strangers—it is too much! I insist that you explain!’

She stood over him, her eyes blazing. The youth, still convulsed, did his best to quiet the paroxysm which had seized him, and at last said, gasping:

‘I was—I was thinking—of your reciting that at Crosby Ledgers—to my mother—and—and what she would say.’

Even under her rouge it could be seen that the poetess turned a grey white.

‘And pray—what would she say?’

The question was delivered with apparent calm. But Madame’s eyes were dangerous. Doris stepped forward. Her uncle stayed her with a gesture. He himself rose, but Madame fiercely waved him aside. Miss Wigram, in the distance, had also moved forward—and paused.

‘What would she say?’ demanded Madame, again—at the sword’s point.

‘I—I don’t know—’ said young Dunstable, helplessly, still shaking. ‘I—I think—she’d laugh.’

And he went off again, hysterically, trying in vain to stop the fit. Madame bit her lip. Then came a torrent of Italian—evidently a torrent of abuse; and then she lifted a gloved hand and struck the young man violently on the cheek.

‘Take that!—you insolent—you—you barbarian! You are my *fiancé*,—my promised husband—and you mock at me; you will encourage your stuck-up mother to mock at me—I know you will! But I tell you—’

The speaker, however, had stopped abruptly, and instead of saying anything more she fell back panting, her eyes on the young man. For Herbert Dunstable had risen. At the blow, an amazing change had passed over his weak countenance and weedy frame. He put his hand to his forehead a moment, as though trying to collect his thoughts, and then he turned—quietly—to look for his hat and stick.

'Where are you going, Herbert?' stammered Madame. 'I—I was carried away—I forgot myself!'

'I think not,' said the young man, who was extremely pale. 'This is not the first time. I bid you good morning, Madame—and good-bye!'

He stood looking at the now frightened woman, with a strange, surprised look, like one just emerging from a semi-conscious state; and in that moment, as Doris seemed to perceive, the traditions of his birth and breeding had returned upon him; something instinctive and inherited had reappeared; and the gentlemanly, easy-going father, who yet, as Doris remembered, when matters were serious 'always got his way,' was there—strangely there—in the degenerate son.

'Where are you going?' repeated Madame, eyeing him. 'You promised to give me lunch.'

'I regret—I have an engagement. Mr. Bentley—when the sitting is over—will you kindly see—Miss Flink—into a taxi? I thank you very much for allowing me to come and watch your work. I trust the picture will be a success. Good-bye!'

He held out his hand to Bentley, and bowed to Doris. Madame made a rush at him. But Bentley held her back. He seized her arms, indeed, quietly but irresistibly, while the young man made his retreat. Then, with a shriek, Madame fell back on her chair, pretending to faint, and Bentley, in no hurry, went to her assistance, while Doris slipped out after young Dunstable. She overtook him on the door-step.

'Mr. Dunstable, may I speak to you?'

He turned in astonishment, showing a grim pallor which touched her pity.

'I know your mother and father,' said Doris hurriedly; 'at least my husband and I were staying at Crosby Ledgers some weeks ago, and my husband is now in Scotland with your people. His name is Arthur Meadows. I am Mrs. Meadows. I—I don't know whether I could help you. You seem'—her smile flashed out—'to be in a horrid mess!'

The young man looked in perplexity at the small, trim lady before him, as though realising her existence for the first time. Her honest eyes were bent upon him with the same expression she had often worn when Arthur had come to her with some confession of folly—the expression which belongs to the maternal side of women, and is at once mocking and sweet. It said—'Of

course you are a great fool!—most men are. But that's the *raison d'être* of women! Suppose we go into the business!

'You're very kind—' he groaned—'awfully kind. I'm ashamed you should have seen—such a thing. Nobody can help me—thank you very much. I am engaged to that lady—I've promised to marry her. Oh, she's got any amount of evidence. I've been an ass—and worse. But I can't get out of it. I don't mean to try to get out of it. I promised of my own free will. Only I've found out now I can never live with her. Her temper is fiendish. It degrades her—and me. But you saw! She has made my life a burden to me lately, because I wouldn't name a day for us to be married. I wanted to see my father quietly first—without my mother knowing—and I have been thinking how to manage it—and finking it of course—I always do funk things. But what she did just now has settled it—it has been blowing up for a long time. I shall marry her—at a registry office—as soon as possible. Then I shall separate from her, and—I hope—never see her again. The lawyers will arrange that—and money! Thank you—it's awfully good of you to want to help me—but you can't—nobody can.'

Doris had drawn her companion into her uncle's small dining-room and closed the door. She listened to his burst of confidence with a puzzled concern.

'Why must you marry her?' she said abruptly, when he paused. 'Break it off! It would be far best.'

'No. I promised. I—' he stammered a little—'I seem to have done her harm—her reputation, I mean. There is only one thing could let me off. She swore to me that—well!—that she was a good woman—that there was nothing in her past—you understand—'

'And you know of nothing?' said Doris, gravely.

'Nothing. And you don't think I'm going to try and ferret out things against her!' cried the youth, flushing. 'No—I must just bear it.'

'It's your parents that will have to bear it!'

His face hardened.

'My mother might have prevented it,' he said bitterly. 'However, I won't go into that. My father will see I couldn't do anything else. I'd better get it over. I'm going to my lawyers now. They'll take a few days over what I want.'

'You'll tell your father?'

'I—I don't know,' he said, irresolutely. She noticed that he did not try to pledge her not to give him away. And she, on her side, did not threaten to do so. She argued with him a little more, trying to get at his real thoughts, and to straighten them out for him. But it was evident he had made up such mind as he had, and that his sudden resolution—even the ugly scene which had made him take it—had been a relief. He knew at last where he stood.

So presently Doris let him go. They parted, liking each other decidedly. He thanked her warmly—though drearily—for taking an interest in him, and he said to her on the threshold :

'Some day, I hope, you'll come to Crosby Ledgers again, Mrs. Meadows—and I'll be there—for once! Then I'll tell you—if you care—more about it. Thanks awfully! Good-bye.'

Later on, when 'Miss Flink,' in a state of sulky collapse, had been sent home in her taxi, Doris, Bentley, and Miss Wigram held a conference. But it came to little. Bentley, the hater of 'rows,' simply could not be moved to take the thing up. 'I kept her from scalping him!—' he laughed—'and I'm not due for any more!' Doris said little. A whirl of arguments and projects were in her mind. But she kept her own counsel about them. As to the possibility of inducing the man to break it off, she repeated the only condition on which it could be done; at which Uncle Charles laughed, and Alice Wigram fell into a long and thoughtful silence.

Doris arrived at home rather early. What with the emotions of the day, the heat, and her work, she was strangely tired and overdone. After tea she strolled out into Kensington Gardens, and sat under the shade of trees already autumnal, watching the multitude of children—children of the people—enjoying the nation's park all to themselves, in the complete absence of their social betters. What ducks they were, some of them!—the little, grimy, round-faced things—rolling on the grass, or toddling after their sisters and brothers. They turned large, inquisitive eyes upon her, which seemed to tease her heart-strings.

And suddenly,—it was in Kensington Gardens that out of the heart of a long and vague reverie there came a flash—an illumination—which wholly changed the life and future of Doris Meadows. After the thought in which it took shape had seized upon her, she sat for some time motionless; then rising to her feet, tottering a little, like one in bewilderment, she turned northwards, and made

her way hurriedly towards Lancaster Gate. In a house there, lived a lady, a widowed lady, who was Doris's godmother, and to whom Doris—who had lost her own mother in her childhood—had turned for counsel before now. How long it was since she had seen 'Cousin Julia'!—nearly two months. And here she was, hastening to her, and not able to bear the thought that in all human probability Cousin Julia was not in town.

But, by good luck, Doris found her godmother, perching in London between a Devonshire visit and a Scotch one. They talked long, and Doris walked slowly home across the park. A glory of spreading sun lay over the grassy glades; the Serpentine held reflections of a sky barred with rose; London, transfigured, seemed a city of pearl and fire. And in Doris's heart there was a glory like that of the evening,—and, like the burning sky, bearing with it a promise of fair days to come. The glory and the promise stole through all her thoughts, softening and transmuting everything.

'When *he* grows up—if he were to marry such a woman—and I didn't know—if all *his* life—and mine—were spoilt—and nobody said a word!'

Her eyes filled with tears. She seemed to be walking with Arthur through a world of beauty, hand in hand.

How many hours to Pitlochry? She ran into the Kensington house, asking for railway guides, and peremptorily telling Jane to get down the small suit-case from the box-room at once.

(*To be concluded.*)

BETWEEN THE LINES.

I. THE ADVANCED TRENCHES.

Being in some sort the Fashion of Story that may be read 'Between the Lines' of the Official War Despatches.

'Near Blank, on the Dash-Dot front, a section of advanced trench changed hands several times, finally remaining in our possession.'

FOR perhaps the twentieth time in half an hour the look-out man in the advanced trench raised his head cautiously over the parapet and peered out into the darkness. A drizzling rain made it almost impossible to see beyond a few yards ahead, but then the German trench was not more than fifty yards off and the space between was criss-crossed and interlaced and a-bristle with the tangle of barb-wire defences erected by both sides. For the twentieth time the look-out peered, and twisted his head sideways to listen, and for the twentieth time he was just lowering his head beneath the sheltering parapet when he stopped and stiffened into rigidity. There was no sound apart from the sharp cracks of the rifles near at hand and running *diminuendo* along the trenches into a rising and falling stutter of reports, the frequent whine and whistle of the more distant bullets, and the quick hiss and 'zipp' of the nearer ones, all sounds so constant and normal that the look-out paid no heed to them, put them, as it were, out of the focus of his hearing, and strained to catch the fainter but far more significant sound of a footstep squelching in the mud, the 'snip' of a wire-cutter at work, the low 'tang' of a jarred wire.

A few hundred yards down the line, a dazzling light sprang out, hung suspended, and slowly floated down, glowing nebulous in the misty rain, and throwing a soft radiance and dusky shadows and gleaming lines of silver along the parapets and wire entanglements.

Intent the look-out stared to his front for a moment, flung muzzle over the parapet and butt to shoulder, and snapped a quick shot at one of the darker blotches that lay prone beyond the outer tangles of wire. The blotch jerked and sprawled, and the look-out shouted, slipped out the catch of his magazine cut-off, and pumped out the rounds as fast as fingers could work bolt and trigger, the stabbing flashes of the discharge lighting with sharp vivid glares his tense features, set teeth, and scowling eyes. There was a pause and stillness for the space of a couple of quick-drawn breaths, and then—pandemonium!

The forward trench flamed and blazed with spouts of rifle-fire, its slightly curved length clearly defined from end to end by the spitting flashes. Verrey lights and magnesium flares turned the darkness to ghastly vivid light, the fierce red and orange of bursting bombs and grenades threw splashes of angry colour on the glistening wet parapets, the flat khaki caps of the British, the dark overcoats of the Germans struggling and hacking in the barbed-wires. The eye was confused with the medley of leaping lights and shadows; the ear was dazed with the clamour and uproar of cracking rifles, screaming bullets, and shattering bombs, the oaths and yells, the shouted orders, the groans and outcries of the wounded. Then from overhead came a savage rush and shriek, a flash of light that showed vivid even amidst the confusion of light, a harder, more vicious crash than all the other crashing reports, and the shrapnel ripped down along the line of the German trench that erupted struggling, hurrying knots of men.

A call from the trench telephone, or the sound of the burst of bomb and rifle fire, had brought the gunners on the jump for their loaded pieces, and once more the guns were taking a hand. Shell after shell roared up overhead and lashed the ground with shrapnel, and for a moment the attack flinched and hung back and swayed uncertainly under the cruel hail. For a moment only, and then it surged on again, seethed and eddied in agitated whirlpools amongst the stakes and strands of the torturing wires, came on again, and with a roar of hate and frenzied triumph leaped at the low parapet. The parapet flamed and roared again in gusts of rapid fire, and the front ranks of the attackers withered and went down in struggling heaps before it. But the ranks behind came on fiercely and poured in over the trench, the lights flickered and danced on plunging bayonets and polished butts; the savage voices of the killing machines were drowned in the more savage clamour of the human fighter, and then . . . comparative silence fell on the trench.

The attack had succeeded, the Germans were in, and, save for one little knot of men who had escaped at the last minute, the defenders were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The captured trench was shaped like the curve of a tall, thin capital D, a short communication trench leading in to either end from the main firing trench that formed the back of the D and a prolongation outwards from it. The curve was in German hands, but no sooner was this certain than the main trench sprang to angry life. The Germans in the captured curve worked in a desperation of haste, pulling

sandbags from what had been the face of the trench and heaving them into place to make a breastwork on the new front, while reinforcements rushed across from the German side and opened fire at the main British trench a score of yards away.

Then, before the gasping takers of the trench could clear the dead and wounded from under their feet, before they could refill their emptied magazines, or settle themselves to new footholds and elbow-rests, the British counter-attack was launched. It was ushered in by a shattering burst of shrapnel. The word had passed to the gunners, careful and minute adjustments had been made, the muzzles had swung round a fraction, and then, suddenly, and quick as the men could fling in a round, slam the breech and pull the firing lever, shell after shell had leapt roaring on their way to sweep the trench that had been British, but now was enemy. For ten or fifteen seconds the shrapnel hailed fiercely on the cowering trench, then, at another word down the telephone, the fire shut off abruptly, to re-open almost immediately further forward over the main German trenches.

From the main British trench an officer leaped, another and another heaved themselves over the parapet, and in an instant the long, level edge of the trench was crowded with scrambling, struggling men. With a hoarse yell they flung themselves forward, and the lost trench spouted a whirlwind of fire and lead to meet their rush. But the German defenders had no fair chance of resistance. Their new parapet was not half formed and offered no protection to the stream of bullets that sleeted in on them from rifles and maxims on their flanks. The charging British infantry carried hand grenades and bombs and flung them ahead of them as they ran, and, finally, there was no thicket of barb-wire to check the swing and impetus of the rush. The trench was reached, and again the clamour of voices raised in fear and pain, the hoarse rancour of hate, the shrill agony of death, rose high on the sounds of battle. The rush swept up on the trench, engulfed it as a wave engulfs the cleft on a rock beach, boiled and eddied about it, and then . . . and then . . . swept roaring over it, and on. The counter-attack had succeeded, and the victors were pushing their advantage home in an attack on the main German trench. The remnants of the German defenders were swept back, fighting hopelessly but none the less fiercely. Supports poured out to their assistance, and for a full five minutes the fight raged and swayed in the open between the trenches and among the wire entanglements. The men who fell were trampled, squirming,

underfoot in the bloody mire and mud, the fighters stabbed and hacked and struck at short arm-length, fell even to using fists and fingers when the press was too close for weapon play and swing.

But the attack died out at last without the German entanglements being passed or their earthwork being reached. Here and there an odd man had scrambled and torn a way through the wire, only to fall on or before the parapet. Others hung limp or writhing feebly to free themselves from the clutching hooks of the wire. Both sides withdrew, panting and nursing their dripping wounds, to the shelter of their trenches, and both left their dead sprawled in the trampled ooze or stayed to help their wounded crawling painfully back to cover. Immediately the British set about rebuilding their shattered trench and parapet; but before they had well begun the spades had to be flung down again and the rifle snatched to repel another fierce assault. This time a storm of bombs, hand grenades, rifle grenades, and every other fiendish device of high-explosives, preceded the attack. The trench was racked and rent and torn, sections were solidly blown in, and other sections were flung out bodily in yawning crevasses and craters. From end to end the line was wrapped in billowing clouds of reeking smoke, and starred with bursts of fire. The defenders flattened themselves close against the forward parapet that shook and trembled beneath them like a live thing under the rending blasts. The rifles still cracked up and down the line, but, in the main, the soaking, clay-smeared men held still and hung on, grimly waiting and saving their full magazines for the rush they knew would follow. It came at last, and the men breathed a sigh of relief at the escape it meant from the rain of high-explosives. It was their turn now, and the roar of their rifle-fire rang out and the bomb-throwers raised themselves to hurl their carefully-saved missiles on the advancing mass. The mass reeled and split and melted under the fire, but fresh troops were behind and pushing it on, and once more it flooded in on the trench. . . .

Again the British trench had become German, although here and there throughout its length knots of men still fought on, unheeding how the fight had gone elsewhere in the line, and intent solely on their own little circle of slaughter.

But this time the German success was hardly made before it was blotted out. The British supports had been pushed up to the disputed point, and as the remnants of the last defenders straggled back they met the fierce rush of the new and fresh force.

This time it was quicker work. The trench by now was shattered and wrecked out of all real semblance to a defensive work. The edge of the new attack swirled up to it, lipped over and fell bodily into it. For a bare minute the defence fought, but it was overborne and wiped out in that time. The British flung in on top of the defenders like terriers into a rat-pit, and the fighters snarled and worried and scuffled and clutched and tore at each other more like savage brutes than men. The defence was not broken or driven out—it was killed out; and lunging bayonet or smashing butt caught and finished the few that tried to struggle and claw a way out up the slippery trench-sides. Hard on the heels of the victorious attackers came a swarm of men running and staggering to the trench with filled sandbags over their shoulders. As the front of the attack passed on over the wrecked trench and pressed the Germans back across the open, the sandbags were flung down and heaped scientifically in the criss-cross of a fresh breastwork. Other men laden with coils of wire and stakes and hammers ran out in front and fell to work erecting a fresh entanglement. In five minutes or ten—for minutes are hard to count and tally at such a time and in such work—the new defence was complete, and the fighters in the open ran back and leapt over into cover.

Once more a steady crackle of rifle-fire ran quivering up and down the line, and from their own trenches the Germans could see, in the light of the flares, a new breastwork facing them, a new entanglement waiting to trap them, a steady stream of fire spitting and sparkling along the line. They could see, too, the heaped dead between the lines, and in their own thinned ranks make some reckoning of the cost of their attempt.

The attempt was over. There were a few score dead lying in ones and twos and little clumped heaps in the black mud; the disputed trench was a reeking shambles of dead and wounded; the turn of the stretcher-bearers and the Red Cross workers had come. There would be another column to add to the Casualty Lists presently, and another bundle of telegrams to be despatched to the 'Next of Kin.'

And to-morrow the official despatch would mention the matter coldly and tersely; and the papers would repeat it; and a million eyes would read with little understanding . . . 'changed hands several times, finally remaining in our possession.'

BOYD CABLE.

STRASBOURG.

AN EPISODE OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

BY PAUL AND VICTOR MARGUERITTE.

TRANSLATED BY S. G. TALLENTYRE.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE Charles was having his *déjeuner* in the kitchen, his uncle Anselme opposite to him. Charles had submitted to have a table napkin tied round his neck, so as not to spoil his velvet suit; his uncle, in black with a white cravat, was in his shirt-sleeves. Ortrude had poured out their coffee and milk and had buttered piles of bread and butter for them, making a wry face as she did so, because for the last three days the countrywomen had not been able to bring into beleaguered Strasbourg the good milk and butter from the farms of Robertsau. The day before the peasants from that village had been fleeing from the Prussians in boats and rafts.

The two servants, Gretchen and Hannah, came and went—the one fair, the other dark—graceful in their fête-day dress, with its little cap of cloth of silver at the back of the head, chemisette of white muslin, black velvet corselet laced in a triangle with a silver lace, short skirt—red or green, according as the wearer was Catholic or Protestant. They laughed and joked, and Anselme and Charles enjoyed listening to them. So did Ortrude, though she was a cross old thing, with her rough face framed in its frilled cap like a nun's, and her lean old body in its inevitable black blouse and skirt.

But although she pretended to scold, she was not cross this morning. It was August 15, the Emperor's birthday, and, as on previous birthdays, her kitchen shone. It was always spotless, but to-day more spotless than ever. It might have been a drawing-room, for its red tiles shone like a mirror, and its white wooden tables were scrubbed till they looked like new. It was fine to see the enormous hearth, where the meat roasted on the spit in front of the fire of vine-branches: the line of copper kitchen utensils, ranging from huge kettles to diminutive saucepans: and the

variety of fish-kettles, of frying and preserving pans. Charles loved those great copper saucepans, the black baking-tins, the old pots humming gently on the fire, that alarming chopping-knife which could so easily reduce his fingers to sausage meat, the rolling-pin which was so much like a clown's *bâton*, and the antique warming-pan, chased and engraved, which in the winter was filled with hot coals and placed between the sheets. Uncle Anselme also enjoyed the friendliness of the kitchen, like a child. Both knew that, in admitting them to it, Ortrude was conferring, not receiving, an honour.

'Aren't you hungry this morning?' she said to Charles, who had his mouth full.

His uncle raised the coffee-pot over the little boy's bowl. 'Won't you have a little more, Charles?' he said, quite concerned.

The simple coffee service in white china was charming; the fat coffee-pot, the slender milk-jug, the oval sugar-basin, the wide coffee-cups in their delightful white *négligé* suggested a family party sitting in a circle—a round-faced and peaceful family in its morning undress.

'Be quick!' said Hannah to Gretchen, 'and we shall see the march past of the troops!'

At ten o'clock there was to be a great memorial service in the Cathedral for those who had fallen at Froeschwiller, and afterwards the Te Deum for the royal birthday. Since early morning the flags had floated from the four turrets. The authorities were to attend the Mass: General Uhrich, fat, short, energetic; the Prefect, in uniform; Admiral Exelmans and his little company of marines; the frontier guard; the firemen; detachments of the garrison and of the militia. Never, smiling Gretchen declared, would the sight have been finer.

Uncle Anselme smiled. He had not experienced the incredible depression of his fellow-citizens—that panic which, on the morrow of Froeschwiller, had sapped their courage—'Strasbourg was as good as lost: what use to defend her without men or cannon?'—nor had he felt the warlike reaction which had made them confident again—'What! an officer with a flag of truce had had the audacity to summon the town to surrender? detachments of cavalry had dared to appear beneath the walls?' &c. &c.

Always easy-going, he continued to absorb himself in his innocent hobbies—curio-hunting in the old shops, strolling in the old streets. The truth was he always lived more or less in a dream and did

not yet realise the facts. The arrival of the wounded and the lamentable influx of the fugitives had naturally touched his heart ; but, after all, it is a soldier's destiny to fight. As a Frenchman, he pitied them ; but that he himself, a studious and peaceful citizen, *bourgeois* of Strasbourg, should personally share such dangers and suffer such evils was an idea that never occurred to him. Even a Strasbourg cut off from the rest of the world, with the last train gone, the telegraph wires and communications cut, the bridges blown up—even the state of siege, the official notices, the arming of the militia and of the national guard—even the first shell falling near the Porte de Saverne (a stray shell, certainly) did not disturb his composure.

He had childish illusions, as had too many others. In Germany he would only see a friend. He knew her and liked her. Certainly, he preferred France, but many things on the opposite side of the Rhine were congenial to him—the dreamy eyes of the young girls, the gentle sentimentality, the homely good nature, the folk-songs, the romantic names for flowers—even the soups, with delicious little forcemeat balls or radishes in them—and the philosophical discussions with professors in gold-rimmed spectacles, and evenings devoted to Beethoven and Schumann.

No ! this wicked war, this deplorable misunderstanding would make none but the poor soldiers suffer. What had Strasbourg to fear—Strasbourg, the flower of Alsace, city of science and theology, proud of her museum, her library, her cathedral, her monuments ; Strasbourg, whose antiquity made her sacred ; Strasbourg, called by the Germans themselves the 'sister-town' ; Strasbourg, the incomparable ? There was the sacrifice, of course, of one's walk to Kehl ; the siege would entail a few privations, but nothing more. Besides, the French army—a rallied MacMahon with his new formations, and possibly Bazaine—would relieve them ! Was not France invincible ?

And Uncle Anselme, helped by Hannah, got into his best frock-coat, took Charles by the hand, and went out. They were to take part in the service at St. Thomas', and then stroll about the town.

André Germath came into the kitchen carrying a half-empty basin of soup : he had been in the spare room, recently vacated by Edel and Lieutenant Haffner and now occupied by one of the wounded, a captain of riflemen to whom, the hospital being full, the Germaths had offered hospitality. The captain, who had been shot in the thigh, was an elderly man—plain, simple, silent—with

large melancholy eyes. He was in a high fever : the doctor, M. Weiss, shook his head over him.

'You haven't had *your* breakfast yet,' said Ortrude to André. She had been with them since they were babies and treated and scolded them with perfect familiarity.

André had red eyelids and hot hands. These feverish days were a nightmare to him, and he scarcely slept at all—the tense atmosphere of the town adding to his grief over the rupture between his father and M. Ansberque. He had never known the strength of the tie which bound him to Lise, until it was broken. And why should it be broken ? Who was answerable ? André certainly took his father's side, and considered M. Ansberque to be entirely in the wrong. But was that a reason he and Lise should suffer ? He looked up and met the affectionate gaze of Ortrude's faded blue eyes in her rough and wrinkled face, and surprised the glances Gretchen and Hannah surreptitiously threw at him. They thought him delightful—he was so gentle and courteous !—and everybody loved Lise. In this homely room, in the big kitchen, he knew that these humble souls were accomplices in a desire to protect and help him.

Moved by their sympathy he answered gently, 'Thank you, Ortrude, I am not hungry.'

That sympathy touched him on his most vital point : if Ortrude, Gretchen, and Hannah pitied him, could his own father and mother do nothing for him ? His conscience was clear : his mother, at his request, had taken a night to think things over, and had promised him an answer this morning. What he had asked of her was very serious ; but still more serious was the uncertainty of the future. He ran upstairs and along the corridor, and knocked at her door.

Mme. Germath kissed him in silence. She had a young face under her abundant fair hair arranged in plaits and *bandeaux* ; her high colour and her brown eyes gave her a look of maturity. At sight, anyone would have known that she was kind, cheerful, and tender-hearted.

'Well, André dear, are you more reasonable ?'

The question deeply distressed him. He had begged her to open communications with the Ansberques. For three days she had refused : after their insult to her husband she felt that she could not set foot in their house. Besides, what could she do ? She had already had great difficulty in preventing Germath from writing to Ansberque to say that, under the circumstances, both families must give up all idea of that marriage which they had

so long planned, desired, and discussed. André knew well that, solely out of kindness to him, his father had consented to remain on the defensive and to see what happened. But nothing happened. All hope of reconciliation faded away. The two men had met face to face and treated each other, if not as enemies, as strangers. Mme. Ansberque hardly returned Mme. Germath's bow. André himself, going to the house on the pretext of taking back some music, had not been admitted, though Mme. Ansberque and Lise were at home : he had heard their voices. Still, refusing to believe in his misfortune, clinging to the smallest hope, it was to Mme. Ansberque he looked for help. She was a woman, and a mother : why should she reject the overtures of another woman and mother ? Pride might separate their husbands—men had prejudices about 'honour'—but could mothers think of anything but the fate of their children ? What were politics, embittered arguments, high words to them ? Were not the smiles and happiness, the tears and grief of Lise and André their all ?

'Reasonable, mother ?' said he. 'You know I can never give up Lise.'

'You care for her so much then, my poor boy ?'

'I did not know that my love for her was so strong ; or rather, I don't know if I do love her, but I know I cannot do without her ; and to tell me that I shall never see her, or speak to her, or hear her again—oh !'—he spoke with that youthful passion and the energy which always alarmed his parents—'I can no longer live like this ! I begin to feel that she is dead !'

'Calm yourself, my dear !' And, making him sit beside her, she softly stroked his hair. 'How can you say such things ? Lise is good, loving, and faithful. I am sure she is more patient and more brave than you are. We live in extraordinary circumstances, and everyone's mind is in a state of tension ; to-morrow, things may be better. Believe me, André, time rights much. You are both so young ! Marriage is quite in the future.'

'Meantime, mother, I am wretched ! You talk of the future—how do you know what unknown troubles it may be hiding ? It is now, when Strasbourg is surrounded by the enemy, when we are going to be bombarded perhaps, when privation and death hang over our heads—now is the time we should all cling to each other and feel our hearts beat in unison. To separate me from Lise at such a moment is cruel and barbarous !'

Mme. Germath tried to smile. 'How you exaggerate, my

dear! Strasbourg runs no danger. The war over, people will become normal again. Why can't you wait? I promise you to keep a strict watch for any chance of a reconciliation.'

André's despair increased. 'No, mother, do not try to deceive me. You know M. Ansberque—and his pride. It is now or never! Later, it will be impossible.'

Mme. Germath shook her head. 'But, my dear boy, the moment is most inauspicious. Ansberque (who has fine qualities, and is such an old friend, I should be the last person to be unfair to him, in spite of his outrageous conduct) will be obdurate in proportion as he is wrong. Self-love never pardons. His has been dreadfully humiliated. All your father's predictions have been verified. God grant that they are not verified still further! Ansberque has in vain paraded his influence with the prefect, has constantly shown himself in his uniform, and been busy everywhere—and now he is stricken to the heart! Be sure, he bears us no good will for being such good prophets!'

André bowed his head. He knew how bitterly his father had felt his inability to prove his zeal for the defence of Strasbourg. Suspecting him of liberalism, the authorities had not allowed him to enrol himself in the National Guard: he fancied Ansberque in this wreaked a secret revenge; but, in fact, it was entirely the prefect who influenced General Uhrich—a brave soldier, recalled from retirement, a stranger to the town, and having little faith in the zeal of civilians so recently armed. More than nine thousand men were thus rejected, their strength wasted, and their enthusiasm spurned.

'Mother,' André repeated with urgent entreaty, 'do be kind! do! Go and see Mme. Ansberque; you will succeed in touching her; she will anyhow tell you something. I shall know if Lise still loves me. *Mon Dieu!* if I doubted it, if I thought . . . I cannot be a soldier'—he looked in deep distress at his lame leg, a trifle shorter than the other—'but I should know how to find the place where a bullet . . .'

'Oh, ungrateful boy and wicked son!' cried Mme. Germath, her eyes full of tears. 'You do not mind breaking my heart by saying such things! That you may not suffer I am to act treacherously to your father and make overtures which will very likely be met with insult and humiliate us all—so that you cannot say, I have not done my best!'

'Very well then, wife, do it!' said M. Germath, as he pushed

open the door. He had heard the last sentence. 'Don't think I blame you. Selfish considerations are contemptible at such a time, and, God is my witness, if Ansberque will shake hands with me, I will respond, with all my heart. Because we two old fools have our ways of looking at things, there is no reason that our children should suffer. Kiss your mother, André, and thank her. Love is such a noble passion that we will do all we can to help you to be happy; but do not forget, my boy, there is another feeling which should animate you—the love of your country. We never,' said Germath in a heart-stirring voice, 'we never make enough of patriotism. It alone can save us in such calamities as these.' And, while Mme. Germath put on her hat and looked for her gloves and mantle, he told them of his anxieties.

What a disgrace it was that, in the panic of the first day, some poor timid things had actually *heard* the Germans placing their guns and driving in piles, that Humblot, Stoumpff—and, alas! others too—had discussed the advisability of giving themselves up! Germath did not even allude to his own personal fortune, his interests involved in the factory of Schiltigheim, now occupied, as was that village, by the enemy. Public affairs alone troubled him. What was the significance of those placards coloured with Urich's political bias? of threats to a peaceful population? How far better would it have been to hurry on the preparations for resistance! So far, the alleys of plane and walnut trees, which formed promenades round the town, had hardly begun to be cut down, or the villas there to be razed.

A general, disguised as a workman, had boldly rushed into the place—Barral, he whom Bosquet called 'the first gunner of France': he was to command the artillery—a heavy task. An officer of high position had told Germath that the fortress and its defences left much to be desired; that there were hardly any casemates and no armoured shelters; that the great powder-magazine was not even covered with earth, and the ramparts had not their proper defences. There were two hundred and fifty guns of all sorts and kinds, some very much out of date, many not mounted. The number of soldiers was painfully small: some detachments of regiments of the line, of the Chasseurs, of the artillery, of the 87th regiment of the line; a few engineers; some sailors; some frontier guards; finally, the battalions and squadrons of infantry reformed after the wreck of Froeschwiller; the militia hardly trained—in all, some twelve or fifteen thousand men.

How right Wohlfart had been the other day! Failing Kehl, could not Schiltigheim have been occupied, and thus the investment hindered? Instead of which, the town was so closely pressed that small reconnoitring parties had already run against the Badenese outposts. The telegraphic observatory, installed on the top of the cathedral, announced that the enemy's ring was contracting. Everywhere the Badenese were felling trees, digging trenches, barricading villages; while they were also establishing themselves on the heights of Hausbergen, gaining ground on the left towards Robertsau, and on the right towards Illkirch and Rhinau. They were drawing near the advance-works; the dull thunder of the guns rolled on.

But André only half heard his father. His thoughts were following his mother, picturing the Ansberques' *salon* with its furniture upholstered in Utrecht velvet, its tapestry curtains, the corner where Lise and he used to sit, in the shelter of a great carved press, near the piano. He saw Lise, with her soft little dreaming face, her clear eyes, the light that shone in them when some emotion moved her, the colour of her cheeks, as delicately pink as a flower, the escaping curls of her silky hair, her slight figure, her innocent charm and her young grace.

Alone in his room, he could not sleep; instead, he paced up and down, his shadow falling in strange shapes on the wall, in the dim candle-light. He could not believe it! It was night—darkness on the town, darkness in his own heart. Lise would never be his *fiancée*! Lise would never be his wife! The Ansberques had dismissed his mother curtly and coldly. She had vainly urged patience and courage on André; he felt nothing but an overwhelming grief, fanned by gusts of helpless rage. By what right did such people dispose of their daughter? Was Lise their goods and chattel? Must he wait till she was of age, free, mistress of herself? But such a long postponement of his wishes—so many weary months that he dared not count them—seemed an eternity to the vehemence of his despair.

He almost doubted his mother: had she really pleaded his cause properly? Supposing he went himself, and braved Ansberque's haughtiness and Mme. Ansberque's scorn? No, they would simply turn him out. One thing at once consoled and pained him—that Lise also grieved. Mme. Germath had caught a glimpse of her: she was pale and her eyes were red. 'Then she

still loves me,' André said to himself ; and this conviction, far from calming him, revived his misery. Love, grief, and revolt struggled together in his soul.

He saw and heard, as if he had been present, that scene with the Ansberques : the surly pride of the father, the studied coldness of the mother.

Without a thought of the long affection which had united them, Ansberque had declared that their projects could never be realised ; too many differences divided the parents to permit of a union between the children.

'You take back your word then ?' Mme. Germath had asked.

And Ansberque replied, 'Yes.'

'But are you sure you will not make them miserable ?'

'My daughter,' he answered, drawing himself up stiffly, his neck rigid in its high white collar, 'is not entitled to express her wishes for another three years.'

'Why make an absolute breach ?' Mme. Germath entreated. 'Without any promises as to the future, let André see Lise sometimes—don't drive him to despair. You were really fond of my poor boy !'

'I have seen too much of the dangers to which dissimilarity of ideas and feelings leads : in marriage, minds should be closely attuned.'

'Not minds—hearts,' corrected Mme. Germath.

'No. Love passes ; character remains.'

'But these children are made for each other, Ansberque ! You know it as well as I do.' And turning to her friend, greatly moved but trying to keep calm, she added, 'Nathalie, for the sake of our old friendship——'

'Don't mention the word !' Ansberque interrupted. 'Your husband himself——'

'We will leave his name out of the discussion,' Mme. Germath retorted with proud dignity. 'Our only concern is with André. For the last time, I implore you not to take an irrevocable decision.'

'Pardon me, madam,' he replied, 'I have made up my mind ; your son shall never again set foot in my house.'

'I hope you will not live to rue your harshness !'

'It is foresight ; had you known me better you would have spared yourself the pain of this interview.'

'I do not regret it. It has taught me to see you as you are. You will sacrifice your daughter and my son to your pride. I pity

you !' And, holding her head high, controlling her feelings, Mme. Germath had withdrawn.

'Poor mother !' thought André, with an impulse of gratitude, and of regret at having exposed her to such a scene.

He leant his burning forehead on the window-pane ; all the painful impressions of the day returned to him—passed before him in a series of pictures, beginning with the melancholy *déjeuner* with its brief conversations and long silences. Directly after the coffee he had got up and had roamed about the town, in the heat and dust, among the crowds of people in their fête-day clothes. He had wandered miserably from the plane-trees of the Broglie to the Cathedral Square, from the Grande Rue to the Quais de l'Ill, in the absurd hope that Lise might suddenly appear. He had prowled round their house, stared at the garden wall, and presently seen one of the servants go by with Mum, the poodle. Wild ideas occurred to him—to write to Lise, put the letter under Mum's collar and bribe the maid. He had felt an almost irresistible temptation to ring at the door bell and rush down the passage ; it seemed to him that Lise would know and run to meet him ; one romantic plan succeeded another in his brain, for, wholly ignorant of love, he was facing the problems of life for the first time.

As he was returning to the house, he ran against Charles, who skipped up to him joyfully, flourishing a little red violin his uncle had bought for him.

'My nephew Heinrich,' he said (he was always intensely proud to be able to talk of 'my nephew') 'has not half such a nice one as this. I shall give Noémi a concert. We went and fetched Noémi, and she had cakes with us at the *pâtisserie*.' And Charles, scraping on the violin, had extracted from it discords so shrill and raucous that André had fled.

What was Lise doing at this night hour ? Was she asleep ? Or, thinking, as he was ?

The silence of the house increased his wakefulness, and he felt himself strangely solitary.

Suddenly a loud report shook the windows, there was a sharp whistling in the air, and then a distant explosion. He trembled from head to foot. Another whistling, and another . . . then he understood.

His father's presentiments were but too well justified. The bombardment was beginning !

His heart beating, he opened the window. The thunder of the cannon, startling the profound silence, filled him with anguish. What he felt was less fear than an inexpressible and a torturing anxiety; a heavy weight, which at each report seemed to fall back on his heart. The town was wrapped in a deep calm—it lay like a great sea of shadows, with the waves dark and motionless. The gas having been turned off since the previous day as a precaution, Strasbourg had gone back to black nights in which the houses, with their great roofs and overhanging timbers, looked a thousand years old. Violent reports came from the ramparts; the town was replying.

Someone knocked at the door. It was Uncle Anselme, holding his candle in his hand. He had slipped on trousers and braces, and had a handkerchief tied over his head.

‘Whatever can that be, André?’

‘Fireworks for the fifteenth of August, uncle! Only, it is the Prussians who are giving us the display!’ Stretching out his arm, he showed the void shot with lightnings. High above the neighbouring houses the Cathedral flung to heaven its octagonal tower; and the pyramid of its fretwork spire, rising above the roofs of the houses, stood clear against the sky.

‘Never!’ said Anselme, whose honest face expressed boundless incredulity. ‘It’s impossible!’

But there were steps on the staircase: cries for help from one landing to another. André, going down to the first floor, found his father and mother both risen. M. Germath was pale with indignation. The terrified servants crept to and fro like ghosts. The old Strasbourger’s sense of right was outraged, and, surrounded by his family, he could but think of his absent daughter and grandson, and of his son-in-law, Ludwig Haffner. *He* was with his regiment. From the neighbouring heights he was taking part in that infamous and sacrilegious bombardment. Of what was he thinking? Of what was Edel thinking? It was impossible they should approve of this war between relatives: of the heart-rending brutality of those shells dropped into a peaceful city—into Strasbourg, the Alsatian, the kinswoman, the ally, the sister of the German towns.

His wife’s face betrayed a suffering no less deep. As for André, his thoughts were with the Ansberques—in Lise’s little room where she also must be on foot and listening. He longed to protect her, take her away, tear her from the peril of death; win her, or die

with her. Charles, from his bed, remembering former fifteenth of August, asked to be allowed to see the fireworks.

In the various windows lights began to appear: the streets were filled with a confused murmuring. Awakened Strasbourg counted one and twenty rounds—the derisive salute for the Emperor's birthday.

'Oh,' cried Charles, perched on a chair in his night-shirt, 'what a lovely Bengal light!'

Below, near the Porte de Saverne, the red flame of a house on fire rose higher every moment.

Uncle Anselme, shaking his head, kept on saying, 'Good God! It's impossible!'

Through the half-opened door of the Haffners' room, where the wounded captain slept, there entered a ray of light. The old officer, who heard all, cried out, 'This is only the beginning. There is much more to come!'

CHAPTER IV.

THE top floor of the house, which Uncle Anselme occupied, consisted of one large, lofty room lit by dormer windows, and of one bedroom.

In the latter were his bed, a cupboard, and a chest of drawers; just what would be required by a poor student. This simplicity not only pleased him, but had become essential to him: he confined his tastes for art and luxury to his museum. For the big room, crowded with valuable furniture, was quite a museum. Everything there bespoke the eccentric old bachelor and the zealous collector: he reached the heights of bliss when, seated in a big old-English arm-chair, smoking a long china pipe, he contemplated his riches through his half-closed eyes.

In the first place, there were tapestries from Flanders whereon monkeys fantastically disported themselves, spurring Arab horses, chasing bathing nymphs under the willows, or banqueting—dressed in brocade—round a table groaning with good things. Then there was a fine Louis XV. bureau in rosewood, with wrought bronzes—a unique specimen; an Italian cabinet of ebony and ivory, with carving like lace-work; and, near by, some Spanish-Mauresque pottery shot with fiery lights; big and little Chinese vases; bronzes; silks from Japan; arms, as heavy as that double-handled sword

which Charles could not lift, and as light as those stilettoes from Damascus, which had pricked their wasp-stings through buff leather doublets as through steel armour. Quite admirable was a piece of furniture from Beauvais, of gilded wood, painted, in a marvellous richness of colouring, with fruits, flowers, and birds. Medals, precious stones, enamels, and little Dresden china figures displayed in glass cases their reliefs, their sparkle, their delicate mosaic, or their graceful outlines.

The heads of saints or warriors emerged from the blackened canvases of old pictures : a fine primitive triptych portrayed three scenes—the Nativity, the miracle of Lazarus, and Christ on the Cross between the two thieves.

There were also miniatures and a Bohemian glass bowl, and, what Charles prized more than anything, grotesque little ivory figures in attitudes so comically natural they seemed to be alive.

Seated on a little stool at the foot of his uncle's armchair, he would listen for the hundredth time to the history of the thirteen bells of the Cathedral : the big bell which was six feet across and required six men to set it going (during the Revolution, when they were taking such things to melt them into metal, it was so heavy they had not been able to get it down) ; the bell of the Gates, which the watchmen rang for a quarter of an hour, one hour before the gates of the town were opened or shut ; the 'silver' bell, of which the 'ammeistre-régent' had the key, and which was only rung on an alarm of treason, at the great fair, and at the arrival or the coronation of kings.

Charles demanded the story of the knight who wagered he would run round the gallery of the tower three times, and who fell into the abyss, followed immediately by his faithful dog ; then the story of the woman who threw herself over, and whose shoe remained caught on one of the turrets—perfectly true stories immortalised by a stone dog and a stone shoe which Charles had seen.

He insisted on other narratives : that of the 'brazier' by which the watchmen on the top of the Cathedral signalled an outbreak of fire ; the great metal horn which they used to blow at eight o'clock in the evening and at midnight to tell the Jews to leave the town (this famous horn was preserved at the Library, where Charles had admired it). There were all sorts of extraordinary things at that Library : terrifying instruments of torture ; the enormous red Cap of Liberty with which the Revolution had adorned the

Cathedral spire ; and, above all, the famous bronze vessel which the men of Zürich brought to Strasbourg in 1576, when they came there to celebrate the shooting matches. Their journey was so quick that this vessel, which they brought along with them full of hot rice-pudding and surrounded with hot sand, arrived, piping hot, at Strasbourg, and 'all the rice was eaten in the tent of the Masons, at the Mayor's table.'

'All the pudding—why, that's something frightful ! a vessel weighing four hundred pounds ! what a good opportunity for indigestion, eh, Charles ?'

The child knew every legend of Strasbourg. Sometimes, to think of the bloody days of '93, the Terror, and the death tribunal whereon sat Taffin and Schneider—ex-priests—frightened him. Sometimes, all by himself, he laughed at the story of King Sigismund, who, whenever he came to the Castle of Luxhof, only allowed six pfennig (two sous) to each person for his food : a sort of King Dagobert, who was such a good-natured king that one morning the Strasbourg ladies drew him from his bed and made him dance through the streets, until, noticing he had bare feet, they went into a shoe-maker's and bought him a pair of rough shoes, which pleased him so much that, on taking leave of the ladies, he gave them each a ring.

How very often Charles had insisted on being taken to the old Chapel of the Temple of St. Thomas, where were to be seen two mummies in glass cases, much more entertaining than the sarcophagus of Maréchal Saxe, with its symbolic figures ! In one of the coffins there was a gentleman dressed in a sort of canvas, with stockings of flax, square shoes, a cap of cloth of silver, a pleated ruff, and gloves : in another, a lady, crowned with flowers, in a blue-green silk dress, pearl bracelets on her arms, and holding a laurel-wreath, whereon sparkled a ruby. Both had waxy faces which shone as if they had been varnished, and their stillness was grotesque and terrible. Charles always thought of the dead thus—presented as a show to the living, condemned to see them walking past, and unable to join them. How bored she must be, that young girl with the hollow cheek-bones and the pinched nose !

Thus, in the midst of such relics and souvenirs, Uncle Anselme and Charles—the one almost as much a child as the other—groping in the dust of the past, escaped the sinister realities of the present.

'May I come in ?' said a voice, and Cousin Stoumpff appeared with his weasel face.

He was followed by Humblot, who had grown so thin and pale in the last ten days that even the enormous moustaches were no longer awe-inspiring.

'Great news!' cried Stoumpff. 'The siege is going to be raised!' A motion of his hands indicated a prompt departure. 'For three days Bazaine's army has fought grandly: the Germans are in full retreat!'

'It's a certainty!' repeated Humblot, greatly excited. 'A dead certainty! We have it from the *préfecture*.'

He stopped, seeing the wide-opened eyes of Uncle Anselme fixed on Stoumpff, who had one side of his face perfectly black and blue, and a black eye.

'Goodness gracious, Stoumpff! what is the matter with you?'

'Oh, nothing—nothing! an accident,' replied Stoumpff uncomfortably.

The truth was, he had stood so long on the Pont du Corbeau gazing intently at the flowing Ill that he had been taken for a spy; a crowd had gathered and beset him, and he had been dragged by his hair to the police-station—the Strasbourgers, since Froeschwiller, having spies on the brain to such an extent that the prefect had threatened with imprisonment anyone who merely got on his roof to see things better. |

In point of fact, spies swarmed in the shape of old brewers' men and office clerks, who had simply waited till they were expelled the town as Germans to offer their services to General von Werder, who commanded the investing army before Strasbourg—a little dry, bilious-looking man, subject to rages as easily roused as appeased, merciless on principle—one of those iron tools which Prussian discipline forges, a Baron of the old days of murder, fire, and pillage.

Those who knew his reputation were agreed on the significance of his appointment—he had succeeded old General von Beyer, gouty, and, it was said, too humane.

Not having seen anyone downstairs (for Mme. Germath had gone to prepare lint bandages in a neighbouring house, and Germath was organising ambulances), Pastor Gottus and Barrister Wohlfart were coming up. Those above knew them by their voices, and knew they were differing.

'But I assure you,' said the pastor, 'some peasants have brought back the three guns into the town! I have seen them myself—and touched them; ay, I myself have!'

They were speaking of the ill-fated sortie of the previous evening, when the troops had given way and abandoned three guns to the Badenese.

Charles, foreseeing boring discussions, slipped out of the half-opened door. He thought that very likely Ortrude would be kneading paste for cakes, and he knew nothing so delightful as to watch her first set the waffle iron on the fire, then put a bit of paste on it as big as a nut (snap! bang! went its little doors); and, after waiting, see it reappear; open it, and find a beautiful little crisp biscuit of a golden brown, with little patterns all over it, hot to the mouth and flavoured with cinnamon. He ran up to Gretchen, who, without orders from anyone, was carrying upstairs a tray full of tankards and a jug filled with freshly drawn beer, as was the custom.

But Wohlfart, shaking his bristly grey head, answered the pastor sharply. 'No! Unfortunately our guns are still in possession of the enemy, though, suspecting a trap, the Badenese did not dare to come and carry them off for half an hour. One of the guns you mistook for them was never used in the sortie, because the pole of the gun carriage was broken, and the other two were in reserve behind the rampart. But the three we have really and truly lost you never saw: the 8^{me} *Anodin*, the *Batailleur*, and the *Aloès*, cast at Strasbourg and rifled at Toulouse. You see, I am well informed! You have been the dupe of the prefect, who declared those guns had been brought back just to calm the people!' And Wohlfart, with his habitual set-back of his gown, eloquently branded the official practice of lying, of which the prefecture seemed to have a monopoly. Thus, this so-called victory of Bazaine was a myth.

'Impossible!' cried Stoumpff.

'Why! It is positively confirmed!' said Humblot, going a little further.

'I repeat—has no foundation. They hoodwink us as if we were children. That sortie of the day before yesterday was a mere nothing.'

This time neither Stoumpff nor Humblot protested; there was a silence, filled only with the sound of the beer which Anselme Germath was pouring into the tankards. The pastor shook his great red face, displeased at having been taken in. The sortie had, in fact, been pitiable; the more so, as it had been made on the day after the salute, as a retaliation. A small column, commanded by Colonel Fiévet, had gone out by the bridge of Altkirch, to the south, towards Neuhof and Neudorf. It comprised 800

infantry, formed of two battalions of foot-soldiers, and 200 cavalry, made up of stragglers from Froeschwiller; ambulance men with stretchers followed. At the first shot the cavalry turned back shouting, and threw themselves among the infantry, who, in spite of the firm stand of some Zouaves under Captain Caillard, broke up and retired in disorder. Colonel Fiévet had been dangerously wounded. What! our men, without striking a blow, lose three guns, pay no heed to their leaders, fly! And General Uhrich did not punish! No court-martial held! A dozen men at least deserved to be shot!

As to that, everybody was agreed—over their foaming beer.

M. Humblot was handling a little box of old red leather bearing a fillet of tarnished gold. 'Your collection,' he said, 'is very much exposed, Anselme, up here in the attics. Don't you take any precautions?'

'Why should I?'

'Well,' said Wohlfart, 'after the warning of the 15th August—'

'Upon my word!' interrupted Stoumpff, 'if I were you, cousin, I should move all I had to the cellars.'

'But,' said Uncle Anselme naively, 'don't you think the whole thing was a joke?'

They all protested. A joke! When there were dead and wounded, and more than twenty houses struck! Pastor Gottus, however, observed that they were now at the 18th, and that for three days nothing had happened; he declined to believe that a civilised people, that soldiers, professedly religious men, who had taken the field singing 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,' would bombard, out of sheer wantonness, a peaceful city and an innocent population. Nor did he believe it was done to intimidate or as a jest; but might not these cannon-balls have been meant for the ramparts and overshot their mark?

'Just consider!' said he, rubbing his bulbous nose with his forefinger, a trick which he used to emphasise his arguments. 'Here we have educated men, of the higher culture and the higher morality; and you believe they would repudiate all the obligations of religion and education! For what conceivable purpose should a Protestant people, renowned for its liberal thinking and enlightenment, professing to spread the cult of Humanity all over the world, thus dishonour itself, bring down upon it the execration of mankind, and massacre—not soldiers—but women and young girls! Germany, which makes a religion of respect for woman! Germany,

with its army full of married men, and of respectable Christian men ! No, no—a thousand times no !’

‘They aimed at the Cathedral, however,’ said Wohlfart. ‘One of my friends has made an examination of the extent of the damage.’

‘Well, fortunately,’ Humblot put in, ‘before a week is out we shall be relieved. Félix Douay is coming down from Belfort, MacMahon from the Vosges, and the two of them will clear Alsace.’

‘Who told you that ?’ asked Wohlfart.

‘Ansberque, who had it from the prefect.’

‘Of course, *from the prefect*,’ said Wohlfart meaningly.

And they could not prevent themselves from laughing, though Ansberque’s name cast a gloom on them. No friend of the house approved of his conduct, and all thought that Stoumpff—cousin of the Germaths and much in their debt—had better have broken with him.

‘Well,’ said Anselme, raising his tankard, ‘let us drink to our deliverance, and that we may soon find ourselves again before a well-spread table, enjoying—let us say—a nice little stuffed sucking-pig with a truffle in his snout, or a barrel of oysters fringed with seaweed !’

‘And in the meantime,’ added the pastor, ‘if the siege continues, let us pray that our Lord will give daily bread to all the poor people in Strasbourg.’

‘Well said !’ commented Wohlfart, who, however, himself much appreciated Ostend oysters, and sucking-pig roasted to a turn.

‘Certainly, certainly,’ said Uncle Anselme reddening, and he buried his nose in his tankard. But the idea that the pastor was trying to correct him occurred to no one (least of all to the pastor himself), for all knew the old fellow’s kind-heartedness.

Meanwhile, Charles in the kitchen was open-mouthed with admiration at the automatic regularity with which Ortrude worked. There were such a lot of little cakes ! First, the nut of dough ; then, slap ! bang ! the doors shut ; then opened again ; and now the nut had become a cake, crisp and crackling. There was quite a heap on the wicker tray, and, on one side, those which had caught the fire a little—the ‘blackamoors’—which were quite as nice as the others.

But Ortrude, pausing in her work, chose the least burnt, put them in a piece of white paper, and tied them up in a parcel, as she never forgot to do.

'Here, Hannah, take these to Noémi at the same time as you take that bottle of medicine which Madame bought; and don't forget to bring me the coffee and sugar.'

Hannah was getting ready, and Charles' eyes brightened with pleasure and eagerness.

'Take me, Hannah!'

She agreed, and Charles trotted at her side down the street. He loved going to see Noémi at her school with the Sisters in the rue de l'Arc-en-Ciel. Sister Basilice always looked at him sadly because he was a little Protestant, and with a sigh, because he was such a dear little boy, offered him a peppermint. He always felt when he went to see Noémi as if he were her protector; she looked such a sad little thing in her dark school frock and her hideous little cap; and he was free, while she was shut in behind the convent doors. Well, anyhow, she should have a lovely parcel of cakes! As to the medicine sent by his mother, Charles liked neither its taste nor its smell, and thought it was very like boot-blackening and water.

He looked round with satisfaction at the liveliness of the streets; the great buckets standing outside the houses in case of fire; many of the shutters fastened back behind their canvas coverings. But why did all this, which he found so entertaining, make Hannah so melancholy? She and Gretchen were two extremes. Gretchen, who was fair, lively, cheerful, and always singing, came into his little room in the mornings like fine weather, with her hair and complexion both bright as the dawn; while Hannah, dark-haired and gently serious, told him stories, tucked him up in his bed in the evening, and when she went away, the lamp she carried off, leaving darkness behind her, made an aureole of half light round her departing figure. She seemed very sad to-day. Taking courage, he asked her why?

She looked at him, astonished. 'That is one of the things you cannot understand, little Charles.'

Yes, he could understand!

She said very simply, 'It is because Wilhelm, my *fiancé*, is with the soldiers who are fighting against Strasbourg—with M. Haffner, you know.'

Yes, Charles knew. He could see Wilhelm, the lieutenant's orderly, a big fine man, who went everywhere with his master. What an appetite he had! He devoured a whole loaf of bread in his basin of coffee and milk, and all the time talked nothing but

sentiment, with his hand on his heart. But what could it matter to Hannah that Wilhelm fought against Strasbourg? For the words war, bombardment, death (in spite of the terrible sight of the wounded at the station) meant nothing definite or serious to Charles. He did not even pay attention to the echo of the guns. Fight? He had fought once with Heinrich, and they had bumped their heads together and scratched each other. His brother-in-law, the lieutenant, had been greatly amused.

But here was the convent school, Sister Basilice, and Noémi. The Sister, who always glided in with her hands in her big sleeves, looked at him with that air of saying, 'A little Protestant! What a pity! But such a dear boy!' And she vanished, no doubt to find the peppermints. Noémi had thrown her arms round Charles' neck.

'Look here,' said he majestically, 'here are some cakes from me, and some medicine from mama.'

She did not seem so delighted as Charles had expected. She had a sad little face and manner: perhaps was thinking how lucky Charles was to have father, mother, uncle, brother, servants—a whole family to spoil him—while she was alone in the world; and school was so very dull! Wasn't she going to undo the parcel? Charles quite expected she would immediately try the cakes, and even offer one to him.

But Sister Basilice came back, without peppermints. She too was preoccupied. Odd, how everybody was!

'Good-bye, Noémi.'

The little girl, with tears in her eyes, kissed him warmly. Directly the door was shut, Charles reminded Hannah of Ortrude's commission, to buy sugar and coffee. He was already picturing the grocer's shop to himself: the Strasbourg pies, the loaf sugar in blue paper—just the shape of a shell, it seemed—a fine tub of red herrings, a smaller one of prunes, and the red and yellow sugared almonds. But, directly she got inside, Hannah exclaimed loudly at the price of things.

'Everyone is getting in their provisions in advance: no one knows what is going to happen,' said M. Hagrem, the grocer.

That night, in their room, M. and Mme. Germath took counsel together.

M. Germath spoke of his personal fears and anxieties. A large part of his fortune, sunk in his cloth works, which had been turned

into a limited liability company, would produce nothing for a long time. The machinery was idle, the work-people thrown on the streets; a few only, of whom one was a foreman, had been able to reach Strasbourg. He had no news whatever of his former partner, at present the manager: he was believed to be in Paris. The Germans were entrenched and barricaded in Schiltigheim. A reconnaissance of the previous day had confirmed this fact, under fire. Houses had already been burnt, and the factory's turn seemed certain to come. Germath had funds in reserve at his banker's in Strasbourg, but many people would be totally ruined. All those breweries and malting-houses, all the factories without the walls were destined either to be requisitioned by the enemy, or to be reduced to ashes under fire.

As for Mme. Germath, she was worrying herself about André. He neither spoke nor ate. She had heard from Louisa Stoumpff, whom she had met, that the poor boy was always prowling about the Ansberques' house: Heaven grant *that* did not end badly! She knew that, under the uncommon gentleness of his disposition, there was a profound strength of feeling. Had he not, lame as he was, talked of joining the Free Company organised by Professor Liès-Bodard?

'No,' said Germath, 'he will not join it. I shall object to that.'

Mme. Germath understood what was in her husband's mind. It was enough that this unrighteous war should be waged; enough to submit to it courageously, without turning it to fratricide. André could never fire a shot which might not kill his brother-in-law, and himself would risk death from a bullet discharged by Haffner's men. This was monstrous; reason rebelled against it. Germath could not hate Haffner simply because he was a German and their enemy—Haffner, who was as respectful to him as if he had been his own son—Haffner, who made Edel so happy—and their dear little Heinrich, with his curly hair! When he thought of all this, an iron girdle seemed to tighten about him, and he felt as if he were fastened in a vice. 'It is enough to send one mad!'

They started up suddenly, a terrible fear at their hearts. They recognised the whistling, the ominous crash of the former evening. A shell had fallen not far off. Jumping out of bed, and pulling a few clothes on, Germath ran to the window and opened it, shuddering at each explosion.

'No doubt this time! Gottus will not be able to say it is a mistake! Another! another! A fire—in the Faubourg National!

Brutes ! brutes ! Let me alone, my dear, I must go out at once. Where shall we all be if we don't help each other now ? It is as clear as daylight ! Are they going to burn the whole quarter ?'

'I'm coming with you,' cried André, who had overheard, from his window just above.

But they had gone only a little way when the bombardment ceased. They went on, however, to the square of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux. On the further side of the canal by the barricades a sinister light reddened the sky. A hay-loft, houses, and a farm were in flames ; dark forms could be seen gesticulating in the distance, and the agonised cries of burning pigs and a sickening smell were borne on the breeze.

Germath and André spent the night in helping the wretched people to move their furniture, and in getting the injured taken away on stretchers. The next morning, returning to their own quarter of the town, they found it distracted, consternation and horror on all faces. Ortrude, grim and bitter, met them on the threshold.

M. Germath cried out, 'Something horrible has happened ?'

'Yes, something horrible !' Her voice was broken with sobs. 'A shell fell on the convent school ; three little girls in bed had their arms and legs cut off ; one was blown to pieces, and Noémi has been crushed to death. . . . Madame has seen the body. . . . Oh ! it is pitiful ! pitiful !'

(To be continued.)

*A WILTSHIREMAN AT SEA.**A NIGHT WATCH.*

THE golden leaves, now ceaselessly careering
In oak-crowned Savernake,
Gallop like tiny horsemen down the clearing,
Rest in the deep fern-brake.

Far up at Glorian the wind is sighing,
And, as the light grows less,
Across the downland sounds the plovers' crying,
The voice of loneliness.

Thither, from this sad waste of waters streaming,
All the unending night,
My heart returns, to see by Kennet gleaming
One cottage window-light.

Yet for your sake it is that I must roam now,
Dear lands, dear lads I know ;
I love you so, I could not stay at home now,
Nor pay the debt I owe.

E. HILTON YOUNG.

WHOSE WHEEL THE PITCHER SHAPED.

I.

THERE is no harm in my mentioning him by name. 'Abiit ad plures.' He had, as far as could be ascertained, no tie of kinship with any human creature of his own race for many years before his death, and his name disappeared from the quarterly list of Provincial Civilians about the time when I passed the last of my departmental tests, which was longer ago than I care to remember. But recently, when the 'Elimination Babu' laid on my table a stack of old records for which Government had no further use, topped by a slip endorsed 'Destroy' with a space vacant for my signature, a bundle of papers marked 'John Sigismund Seal' stared at me from the top of the heap, and after signing the slip I put the bundle on one side.

It was the complete series of confidential reports on his work from the day he entered Government service to the year of his death. Seal, as I had known him, was a heavy-shouldered man far travelled along the downward track, not, alas! of years only, though he was past middle age, but the path down which men go whose youth is the least precious thing that the stealing years take with them. An elderly man of clumsy movements, with drooping grey moustache and features thickened by long exposure to the Indian sun, by self-neglect, and by drink. Yet I remembered how I had marked, at our first encounter, his eyes, which were of a piercing blue, and his seat on a horse as in some manner suggestive of quite another Seal, a person whom it would have been preposterous to associate in thought with cheap bazaar brandy and the clash of silver ankle-rings within the bungalow. And my suspicions had been correct, for the portrait of that other Seal was now on the table before me, limned by men who knew character when they met it, the military Deputy Commissioners of the early 'seventies.

Ingenuously enough do the senior officers of the districts where the boy put in his first few years of service express their astonishment at his being a gentleman. Then, as now, the Provincial Civil Service was almost entirely manned by Indians and by Europeans 'of the country.' I fancy that the attitude of the home-recruited

towards the last-named, in social matters, was less liberal at that period than it is to-day. At all events, Seal's admission to the Club of his first station had called for something very like an 'apologia' from the Head of his district, whose confidential report postulates the existence of a demi-official letter on the subject. He declines, with vigour, to modify his first opinion of his subordinate's eligibility. 'A fine worker and good after pig' is the comment of another of his seniors. A third alludes almost enthusiastically to his executive capacity and declares that he is wasted in a minor sub-division. So run the reports over a space of some four years. Thereafter their tone changes. References to a background of demi-official correspondence thicken. The young assistant is moved from one district to another with unexplained frequency, but with every transfer his failure to fulfil his early promise becomes more marked. There is no further mention of the Station Club. At last the ugly facts appear without disguise. Seal, deaf to persuasion, deafer still, as one reads between the lines, to threats, has stepped down from his proud seat of race and taken to himself a woman of the people he is paid to govern.

And as I perused a plain-spoken old officer's indignant confession of his inability to lift the young man into the paths of decency again, there rose to my memory the amazing record of a tombstone in the Christian cemetery of an Indian cantonment. 'Sacred to the memory of Parbati Bai,' it runs, and its date is 1847, 'for seventeen years the faithful kept woman of'. These confidential reports, I thought, have not told all. Forty years back, as the ground plan of many a ruined bungalow testifies, allowances were made for the England-born, whose low salaries bound them to the East till death.

Moreover, this mismating in itself would not account for the rapid decadence of the man's work from extra efficiency to a dead level of semi-incompetence not sufficient to warrant his dismissal, but justifying the withholding of the promotion that never came to Seal after his sixth year of service. Then, when I had read a little further, those faded strips of paper gave up their secret. Seal the man had murdered the boy John Sigismund with strong liquor.

Not that this, in truth, was any revelation to me, only, my recollection of the occupant of the bungalow, with the crooked verandah pillars and decaying thatch half buried under a wave of purple Bougainvillea, had slumbered for so many years that

I had clean forgotten all about the Seal known to me merely by report of my elders. As flowers spring from mire, so must have grown the personality which to me has been and will always be a rare delight to recall, 'a thing to thank God on,' though the memory of it, as of nearly all keen pleasures, is shot through with poignant regret.

II.

In those days I was a supernumerary assistant on training, with a roving commission to camp through the district, pursuing no more precise object than to learn the language and make friends with all and sundry. Golden days those are for the newly-joined, astride of the first horse he has called his own, exultant in his bright hog-spears and the new rifle, his father's parting gift. Seal, following age-old Indian custom, had ridden out from his squalid headquarters town to meet me on the last stage of my march to the railway. He was a white man, and I had spoken no English for weeks. His reputation was known to me; nevertheless, with the arrogance of youth and abounding spirits, I forced my company on him for breakfast and, laughing, swept aside his feeble excuses of poor fare and lodging. The season was Christmas and I would take no denial. As we rode into the town it both puzzled and amused me to mark his transparent anxiety to keep in front of me. Mounted on a cheap country-bred he was outpaced with such consummate ease by the swinging trot of my high-class waler that I laughed again over my shoulder at his strivings in my rear. There was no mistaking the only European's house on the outskirts of the town, and I was some way ahead of him when the waler, snorting, slowed to a walk in a weed-grown drive between tall hedges of Indian privet. So this, said I to myself, was his bungalow. But that thick-waisted native woman glaring at me from the verandah, that virago with the unkempt hair and vicious eyes, who and what was she? Then in a flash I understood, half turned my horse to go, looked into the stone-grey face of Seal as he came up behind me, and all my heart went out to him in remorse at my own thoughtlessness. 'Ride on, sir,' he said quietly, 'I breakfast by myself as a rule and shall be glad of your company.'

Silent and ashamed, I obeyed him, and immediately, as if by magic, the cloud of embarrassment that shadowed us both lifted. The apparition in the verandah had disappeared. In her place

there stood, facing us, a doe antelope with a half-grown fawn at her side. Mother and child, with twitching ears and eyes brimful of wild innocence, were stamping impatient feet and watching me in a shy anxiety that was exquisite to witness. When a syce led the horses away, the two leaped down from the high verandah plinth, and dancing, light as thistledown, to meet their master, covered his caressing hand with greedy kisses. Then I saw how the whole compound and untidy apology for a garden had broken out into such a riot of welcome as left me wondering into what paradise, what fairyland of rare and beautiful pets I had trespassed. Two mouse deer no bigger than hares dashed between my feet in a headlong scurry to oust the antelope from her place of honour. As I stepped hastily out of the way the towering form of a blue bull clove the hedge asunder, shouldered me aside with superb insolence, and striding up to Seal the great beast laid its tasselled throat on his shoulder in silent content. Up and down the long verandah a pair of mongooses were turning somersaults, backwards and forwards without a pause, as weasels play on a sunny morning in England. There were birds everywhere, fluttering, rustling, converging on us from every quarter. Seal touched my arm and pointed to the gable of the porch where a cat-like animal was rocking sideways, body hunched, back arched and furry head craning into space. 'Look out,' he shouted, and braced himself, smiling, for the shock as a great flying squirrel dropped like a descending biplane from the roof, hurtled past my ear and flattened itself on Seal's broad chest with a resounding thud. Thence it climbed leisurely to his shoulder, and wrapping its face in its voluminous parachute, relapsed into its normal daylight slumber. And this, enriched with other episodes which I have forgotten, was the home-coming of Seal the drunkard, the *déclassé*, the incompetent.

Breakfast was a lengthy meal, and the food bad beyond all telling. We shared it with an otter and a pair of comb-ducks, the drake a magnificent person as large as a goose and resplendent in bottle-green and dazzling white. The otter—this is a hard saying but true—ate bread and butter in preference to the most tempting morsels of goat-mutton, and between courses sat bolt upright and picked his teeth with his finger-nails. The big drake remained majestically aloof at the edge of the back verandah, his back turned to the antelope, which, from the lower level of the ground, gazed yearningly over the plinth into the dining-room. As often as a handful of crumbs was thrown to the drake, the crafty bird would

dispose his body parallel to the plinth's edge, and with greedy neck extended at a right angle foodwards, fend off the antelope's acquisitive nose with a shower of wing blows on her face. Wincing and baffled the doe drew back a step, then rose vertically into the air as only an antelope can leap. But she had missed count of the low eaves and collided with crashing force against a rafter-end. Whereupon she trotted off discomfited, shaking her pretty head in pained disgust, and I, an amused spectator of the little comedy, turned to address my host.

Then, for the first but not the last time during that memorable meal, the thing happened which for want of a better word I must call uncanny. For Seal looked at the bird, the bird looked up at Seal, and both of them laughed.

I despair of conveying my meaning with any approach to accuracy. I am not even certain that the drake made any noise at all—certainly he did not open his beak and say 'ha! ha!'—or that anything more than a glance passed between those two. But of one fact I am sure, that in that instant I witnessed a miracle, the complete fusion, *on the same level*, of a human and an animal intelligence. The gateless barrier opened before my eyes, then softly closed again.

'Uncanny,' with its unavoidably disagreeable connotation, is certainly not the right word. Possessed as I have been from earliest childhood with a consuming passion for all that passes by the name of Natural History, the slight involuntary spinal shiver that seized me when I intercepted that current flowing between bird and man was far removed from any sensation of discomfort at the super-normal. Simply, I became conscious that here was a man who had bridged the great gulf, who held the great mystery, who moved serene and at his ease in that fascinating nether world of animal intelligence with which we others communicate only by the coarse media of sport and food and fear. I saw Seal to my unspeakable delight exert this power at least half a dozen times in the course of breakfast. But in some instances its manifestation was so subtle as to evade completely the grasp of language, so momentary that the fugitive spinal shiver was my first intimation that it had happened again. He woke the flying squirrel from its slumber on his shoulder, not by any definite sound or call, but, as it seemed to me, with the slightest shifting of the tone of his ordinary speaking voice. Twice he did this, once for his own pleasure and once at my request. The room was full of lavish noise, for a

hornbill had joined us from the garden and was engaging the otter in a rough-and-tumble skirmish under the table. And yet, when Seal understood that I desired to talk the close 'shop' that bird-lovers use when they foregather, it became on the moment as silent as the grave and empty of every living creature besides us two. There was nothing sensational or gratuitous in all this, nothing of the ring-master. It was all part of the man's daily life and my presence, obviously, made not the smallest difference.

The day had turned before I left him. Much matter for furious thinking I took with me then and have carried about, undiminished, for a score of years since. But as I rode to the station that afternoon, with the sensations of one who emerges from a curious confused dream, nothing seemed stranger to me than this, that once in our conversation I had asked Seal to identify a certain waterfowl which I was describing. '*Melanocephala*,' he had mused aloud, searching his memory, 'more likely a *Himantopus*,' and his speech had betrayed not the finished ornithologist only, but even more unmistakably, one who had been, in his time, a finished scholar. There are some shibboleths that cannot fail.

Not long after our meeting his work fell so hopelessly into arrears that the Administration ordered his retirement on a reduced pension. The rent of the thatched bungalow was now far beyond his means. He vanished into the twilight of the native bazaar, where liquor is cheap, but there is scant house-room for men, and snub-nosed parakeets, fretting out their lives in tiny hoop-iron cages scream without ceasing for the release that comes only with death. Maddening reminders of the past must these have been to the broken man alone, now, with his vice and the dark author of his degradation. . . .

III.

I received a letter from him a few days before his end, and with the letter a certified copy of a document nearly a quarter of a century old recording his marriage by the pastor of a Lutheran Mission with Fatima Bi, daughter of Abdullah, convert to the Christian Faith. He desired that his arrears of pension, if any, should be paid to his wife. There was nothing more in the letter, but the word 'wife' was heavily underlined.

So, after all, he had been married to her from the very beginning. What bitter spring of obstinacy, hardening through the years, had

provoked him to conceal the truth from the little official society that had first welcomed, then banished, finally, forgotten him ?

With a word he might have cleared his good name before them all. A hundred kindly hands would have helped him to remake, as far as possible, the shattered foundation of his career. But those confidential reports proved beyond question that the word was never spoken, that his fellows had taken for true the slander which he had never stooped to deny. Did he drink to forget, to win courage to persevere in his proud secrecy, or to escape from the intolerable isolation of the Northerner alone in India ? I do not know ; I prefer to think of him as I found him in the thatched house with the crooked verandah pillars, Seal the successful, Seal the brilliant adored despot of a kingdom all his own. To his subjects within those inviolable frontiers he must surely have seemed the greatest human being that ever lived. I picture them passing judgment on the smart young Eurasian his successor, before they went their several ways. 'This man,' their verdict would have run, 'is deaf, blind, cruel, incompetent, and utterly unfit for fellowship with the meanest creature that breathes. We will have none of him. But of him who is gone from us we say only this : All that a man should be he was.' And who shall affirm that their verdict counts for nothing in the great Court of Final Appeal ?

C. G. CHENEVIX TRENCH.

'K.'¹

BY MARY ROBERTS RINEHART.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOST DANGEROUS OF TOYS.

CARLOTTA HARRISON pleaded a headache, and was excused from the operating-room and from prayers.

'I'm sorry about the vacation,' Miss Gregg said kindly, 'but in a day or two I can let you off. Go out now and get a little air.'

The girl managed to dissemble the triumph in her eyes.

'Thank you,' she said languidly, and turned away. Then: 'About the vacation, I am not in a hurry. If Miss Simpson needs a few days to straighten things out, I can stay on with Dr. Wilson.'

Young women on the eve of a vacation were not usually so reasonable. Miss Gregg was grateful.

'She will probably need a week. Thank you. I wish more of the girls were as thoughtful, with the house full and operations all day and every day.'

Outside the door of the anæsthetising-room Miss Harrison's languor vanished. She sped along corridors and up the stairs, not waiting for the deliberate elevator. Inside of her room, she closed and bolted the door, and, standing before her mirror, gazed long at her dark eyes and bright hair. Then she proceeded briskly with her dressing.

Carlotta Harrison was not a child. Though she was only three years older than Sidney, her experience of life was as of three to Sidney's one. The product of a curious marriage—when Tommy Harrison of Harrison's Minstrels, touring Spain with his troupe, had met the pretty daughter of a Spanish shopkeeper and eloped with her—she had certain qualities of both, a Yankee shrewdness and capacity that made her a capable nurse, complicated by occasional outcroppings of Southern Europe, furious bursts of temper, slow and smouldering vindictiveness. A passionate creature, in reality, smothered under hereditary Massachusetts caution.

She was well aware of the risks of the evening's adventure. The only dread she had was of the discovery of her escapade by

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the hospital authorities. Lines were sharply drawn. Nurses were forbidden more than the exchange of professional conversation with the staff. In that world of her choosing, of hard work and little play, of service and self-denial and rigorous rules of conduct, discovery meant dismissal.

She put on a soft black dress, open at the throat, and with a wide white collar and cuffs of some sheer material. Her yellow hair was drawn high under her low black hat. From her Spanish mother she had learned to please the man, not herself. She guessed that Dr. Max would wish her to be inconspicuous, and she dressed accordingly. Then, being a cautious person, she disarranged her bed slightly and thumped a hollow into her pillow. The nurses' rooms were subject to inspection, and she had pleaded a headache.

She was exactly on time. Dr. Max, driving up to the corner five minutes late, found her there, quite matter-of-fact but exceedingly handsome, and acknowledged the evening's adventure much to his taste.

'A little air first, and then supper—how's that?'

'Air first, please. I'm very tired.'

He turned the car toward the suburbs, and then, bending toward her, smiled into her eyes.

'Well, this is life!'

'I'm cool for the first time to-day.'

After that they spoke very little. Even Wilson's superb nerves had felt the strain of the afternoon, and under the girl's dark eyes were purplish shadows. She leaned back, weary but luxuriously content.

Once he turned and looked down at her.

'Not uneasy, are you?'

'Not particularly. I'm too comfortable. But I hope we're not seen.'

'Even if we are, why not? You are going with me to a case. I've driven Miss Simpson about a lot.'

It was almost eight when he turned the car into the drive of the White Springs Hotel. The six-to-eight supper was almost over. One or two motor parties were preparing for the moonlight drive back to the city. All around was virgin country, sweet with early summer odours of new-cut grass, of blossoming trees and warm earth. On the grass terrace overhanging the valley, where ran Sidney's unlucky river, was a magnolia full of creamy blossoms

among waxed leaves. Its silhouette against the sky was quaintly heart-shaped.

Under her mask of languor, Carlotta's heart was beating wildly. What an adventure! What a night! Let him lose his head a little; she could keep hers. If she were skilful and played things right, who could tell? To marry him, to leave behind the drudgery of the hospital, to feel safe as she had not felt for years, that was a stroke to play for!

The magnolia was just beside her. She reached up and, breaking off one of the heavy-scented flowers, placed it in the bosom of her black dress.

Sidney and K. Le Moyne were dining together. The novelty of the experience had made her eyes shine like stars. She saw only the magnolia tree shaped like a heart, the terrace edged with low shrubbery, and beyond the faint gleam that was the river. For her the dish-washing clatter of the kitchen was stilled, the noises from the bar were lost in the ripple of the river; the scent of the grass killed the odour of stale beer that wafted out through the open windows. The unshaded glare of the lights behind her in the house was eclipsed by the crescent edge of the rising moon. Dinner was over. Sidney was experiencing the rare treat of after-dinner coffee.

Le Moyne, grave and contained, sat opposite her. To give so much pleasure, and so easily! How young she was, and radiant! No wonder the boy was mad about her. She fairly held out her arms to life.

Ah, that was too bad! Another table was being brought; they were not to be alone. But what roused in him violent resentment only appealed to Sidney's curiosity.

'Two places!' she commented. 'Lovers, of course. Or perhaps honeymooners.'

K. tried to fall into her mood.

'A box of candy against a good cigar, they are a stolid married couple.'

'How shall we know?'

'That's easy. If they loll back and watch the kitchen door, I win. If they lean forward, elbows on the table, and talk, you get the candy.'

Sidney, who had been leaning forward, talking eagerly over the table, suddenly straightened and flushed.

Carlotta Harrison came out alone. Although the tapping of her heels was dulled by the grass, although she had exchanged her cap for the black hat, Sidney knew her at once. A sort of thrill ran over her. It was the pretty nurse from Dr. Wilson's office. Was it possible—but of course not! The book of rules stated explicitly that such things were forbidden.

'Don't turn round,' she said swiftly. 'It is the Miss Harrison I told you about. She is looking at us.'

Carlotta's eyes were blinded for a moment by the glare of the house lights. She dropped into her chair, with a flash of resentment at the proximity of the other table. She languidly surveyed its two occupants. Then she sat up, her eyes on Le Moyne's grave profile turned toward the valley.

Lucky for her that Wilson had stopped in the bar, that Sidney's instinctive good manners forbade her staring, that only the edge of the summer moon shone through the trees. She went white and clutched the edge of the table, with her eyes closed. That gave her quick brain a chance. It was madness, June madness. She was always seeing him, even in her dreams. This man was older, much older. She looked again.

She had not been mistaken. Here, and after all these months! K. Le Moyne, quite unconscious of her presence, looked down into the valley.

Wilson appeared on the wooden porch above the terrace, and stood, his eyes searching the half light for her. If he came down to her, the man at the next table might turn, would see her——

She rose and went swiftly back toward the hotel. All the gaiety was gone out of the evening for her, but she forced a lightness she did not feel.

'It is so dark and depressing out there—it makes me sad.'

'Surely you do not want to dine in the house?'

'Do you mind?'

'Just as you wish. This is your evening.'

But he was not pleased. The prospect of the glaring lights and soiled linen of the dining-room jarred on his æsthetic sense. He wanted a setting for himself, for the girl. Environment was vital to him. But when, in the full light of the moon, he saw the purplish shadows under her eyes, he forgot his resentment. She had had a hard day. She was tired. His easy sympathies were roused. He leaned over and ran his hand caressingly along her bare fore-arm.

'Your wish is my law—to-night,' he said softly.

After all, the evening was a disappointment to him. The spontaneity had gone out of it, for some reason. The girl who had thrilled to his glance those two mornings in his office, whose sombre eyes had met his, fire for fire, across the operating-room, was not playing up. She sat back in her chair, eating little, starting at every step. Her eyes, which by every rule of the game should have been gazing into his, were fixed on the oilcloth-covered passage outside the door.

'I think, after all, you are frightened!'

'Terribly.'

'A little danger adds to the zest of things. You know what Nietzsche says about that.'

'I am not fond of Nietzsche.' Then, with an effort: 'What does he say?'

'"Two things are wanted by the true man—danger and play. Therefore he seeketh woman as the most dangerous of toys."'

'Women are dangerous only when you think of them as toys. When a man finds that a woman can reason—do anything but feel—he regards her as a menace. But the reasoning woman is really less dangerous than the other sort.'

This was more like the real thing. To talk careful abstractions like this, with beneath each abstraction its concealed personal application, to talk of woman and look in her eyes, to discuss new philosophies with their freedoms, to discard old creeds and old moralities—that was his game. Wilson became content, interested again. The girl was nimble-minded. She challenged his philosophy and gave him a chance to defend it. With the conviction, as their meal went on, that Le Moyne and his companion must surely have gone, she gained ease.

It was only by wild driving that she got back to the hospital by ten o'clock.

Wilson left her at the corner, well content with himself. He had had the rest he needed in congenial company. The girl stimulated his interest. She was mental, but not too mental. And he approved of his own attitude. He had been discreet. Even if she talked, there was nothing to tell. But he felt confident that she would not talk.

As he drove up the Street, he glanced across at the Page house. Sidney was there on the door-step, talking to a tall man who stood below and looked up at her. Wilson settled his tie, in the darkness. Sidney was a mighty pretty girl. The June night was in his blood.

He was sorry he had not kissed Carlotta good night. He rather thought, now he looked back, she had expected it.

As he got out of his car at the kerb, a young man who had been standing in the shadow of the tree-box moved quickly away.

Wilson smiled after him in the darkness.

'That you, Joe?' he called.

But the boy went on.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON A BALCONY.

SIDNEY entered the hospital as a probationer early in August. Christine was to be married in September to Palmer Howe, and, with Harriet and K. in the house, she felt that she could safely leave her mother.

The balcony outside the parlour was already under way. On the night before she went away, Sidney took chairs out there and sat with her mother until the dew drove Anna to the lamp in the sewing-room and her 'Daily Thoughts' reading.

Sidney sat alone and viewed her world from this new and pleasant angle. She could see the garden and the whitewashed fence with its morning-glories, and at the same time, by turning her head, view the Wilson house across the Street. She looked mostly at the Wilson house.

K. Le Moyne was upstairs in his room. She could hear him tramping up and down, and catch, occasionally, the bitter-sweet odour of his old briar pipe.

All the small loose ends of her life were gathered up—except Joe. She would have liked to get that clear, too. She wanted him to know how she felt about it all: that she liked him as much as ever, that she did not want to hurt him. But she wanted to make it clear, too, that she knew now that she would never marry him. She thought she would never marry; but if she did it would be to a man doing a man's work in the world. Her eyes turned wistfully to the house across the Street.

K.'s lamp still burned overhead, but his restless tramping about had ceased. He must be reading—he read a great deal. She really ought to go to bed. A neighbourhood cat came stealthily across the Street, and stared up at the little balcony with green-glowing eyes.

'Come on, Bill Taft,' she said. 'Reginald is gone, so you are welcome. Come on.'

Joe Drummond, passing the house for the fourth time that evening, heard her voice, and hesitated uncertainly on the pavement.

'That you, Sid?' he called softly.

'Joe! Come in.'

'It's late; I'd better get home.' The misery in his voice hurt her.

'I'll not keep you long. I want to talk to you.'

He came slowly toward her.

'Well?' he said hoarsely.

'You're not very kind to me, Joe.'

'My God!' said poor Joe. 'Kind to you! Isn't the kindest thing I can do to keep out of your way?'

'Not if you are hating me all the time.'

'I don't hate you.'

'They why haven't you been to see me? If I have done anything——' Her voice was a-tingle with virtue and outraged friendship.

'You haven't done anything but—show me where I get off.'

He sat down on the edge of the balcony and stared out blankly.

'If that's the way you feel about it——'

'I'm not blaming you. I was a fool to think you'd ever care about me. I don't know that I feel so bad—about the thing. I've been around seeing some other girls, and I notice they're glad to see me, and treat me right, too.' There was boyish bravado in his voice. 'But what makes me sick is to have everyone saying you've jilted me.'

'Good gracious! Why, Joe, I never promised.'

'Well, we look at it in different ways; that's all. I took it for a promise.'

Then suddenly all his carefully-conserved indifference fled. He bent forward quickly and, catching her hand, held it against his lips.

'I'm crazy about you, Sidney. That's the truth. I wish I could die!'

The cat, finding no active antagonism, sprang up on the balcony and rubbed against the boy's quivering shoulders; a breath of air stroked the trail of morning-glory like the touch of a friendly hand.

Sidney, facing for the first time the enigma of love and despair, sat, rather frightened, in her chair.

'You don't mean that!'

'I mean it, all right. If it wasn't for the folks, I'd jump in the river. I lied when I said I'd been to see other girls. What do I want with other girls? I want you!'

'I'm not worth all that.'

'No girl's worth what I've been going through,' he retorted bitterly. 'But that doesn't help any. I don't eat; I don't sleep—I'm afraid sometimes of the way I feel. When I saw you at the White Springs with that lodger chap—'

'Ah! You were there!'

'If I'd had a gun I'd have killed him. I thought—'

So far, out of sheer pity, she had left her hand in his. Now she drew it away.

'This is wild, silly talk. You'll be sorry to-morrow.'

'It's the truth,' doggedly.

But he made a clutch at his self-respect. He was acting like a crazy boy, and he was a man, full twenty-two!

'When are you going to the hospital?'

'To-morrow.'

'Is that Wilson's hospital?'

'Yes.'

Alas for his resolve! The red haze of jealousy came again. 'You'll be seeing him every day, I suppose.'

'I dare say. I shall also be seeing twenty or thirty other doctors, and a hundred or so men patients, not to mention visitors. Joe, you're not rational.'

'No,' he said heavily, 'I'm not. If it's got to be someone, Sidney, I'd rather have it the lodger upstairs than Wilson. There's a lot of talk about Wilson.'

'It isn't necessary to malign my friends.'

He rose.

'I thought perhaps, since you are going away, you would let me keep Reginald. He'd be something to remember you by.'

'One would think I was about to die! I set Reginald free that day in the country. I'm sorry, Joe. You'll come to see me now and then, won't you?'

'If I do, do you think you may change your mind?'

'I'm afraid not.'

'I've got to fight this out alone, and the less I see of you the better.' But his next words belied his intention. 'And Wilson had better look out. I'll be watching. If I see him playing any of his tricks around you—well, he'd better look out.'

That, as it turned out, was Joe's farewell. He had reached the breaking-point. He gave her a long look, blinked, and walked rapidly out to the Street. Some of the dignity of his retreat was lost by the fact that the cat followed him, close at his heels.

Sidney was hurt, greatly troubled. If this was love, she did not want it—this strange compound of suspicion and despair, injured pride and threats. Lovers in fiction were of two classes—the accepted ones, who loved and trusted, and the rejected ones, who took themselves away in despair, but at least took themselves away. The thought of a future with Joe always around a corner, watching her, obsessed her. She felt aggrieved, insulted. She even shed a tear or two, very surreptitiously; and then, being human and much upset, and the cat startling her by its sudden return and selfish advances, she shooed it off the verandah and set an imaginary dog after it. Whereupon, feeling somewhat better, she went in and locked the balcony window and proceeded upstairs.

Le Moyne's light was still burning. The rest of the household slept. She paused outside the door.

'Are you sleepy?'—very softly.

There was a movement inside, the sound of a book put down. Then: 'No, indeed.'

'I may not see you in the morning. I leave to-morrow.'

'Just a minute.'

From the sounds, she judged that he was putting on his shabby grey coat. The next moment he had opened the door and stepped out into the corridor.

'I believe you had forgotten!'

'I? Certainly not. I started downstairs a while ago, but you had a visitor.'

'Only Joe Drummond.'

He gazed down at her quizzically.

'And—is Joe more reasonable?'

'He will be. He knows now that I—that I shall not marry him.'

'Poor chap! He'll buck up, of course. But it's a little hard just now.'

'I believe you think I should have married him.'

'I am only putting myself in his place and realising—— When do you leave?'

'Just after breakfast.'

'I am going very early. Perhaps——'

He hesitated. Then, hurriedly:

'I got a little present for you—nothing much, but your mother was quite willing. In fact, we bought it together.'

He went back into his room, and returned with a small box.

'With all sorts of good luck,' he said, and placed it in her hands.

'How dear of you! And may I look now?'

'I wish you would. Because, if you would rather have something else——'

She opened the box with excited fingers. Ticking away on its satin bed was a small gold watch.

'You'll need it, you see,' he explained nervously. It was extravagant, under the circumstances. 'Your mother's watch, which you had intended to take, had no second-hand. You'll need a second-hand to take pulses, you know.'

'A watch,' said Sidney, eyes on it. 'A dear little watch, to pin on and not put in a pocket. Why, you're the best person!'

'I was afraid you might think it presumptuous,' he said. 'I haven't any right, of course. I thought of flowers—but they fade and what have you? You said that, you know, about Joe's roses. And then, your mother said you wouldn't be offended——'

'Don't apologise for making me so happy!' she cried. 'It's wonderful, really. And the little hand is for pulses! How many queer things you know!'

After that she must pin it on, and slip in to stand before his mirror and inspect the result. It gave Le Moyne a queer thrill to see her there in the room, among his books and his pipes. It made him a little sick, too, in view of to-morrow and the thousand-odd to-morrows when she would not be there.

'I've kept you up shamefully,' she said at last, 'and you get up so early. I shall write you a note from the hospital, delivering a little lecture on extravagance—because how can I now, with this joy shining on me? And about how to keep Katie in order about your socks, and all sorts of things. And—and now good night.'

She had moved to the door, and he followed her, stooping a little to pass under the low chandelier.

'Good night,' said Sidney.

'Good-bye—and God bless you.'

She went out, and he closed the door softly behind her.

CHAPTER IX.

CHARITY AND ITS SISTER, SERVICE.

SIDNEY never forgot her early impressions of the hospital, although they were chaotic enough at first. There were uniformed young women coming and going, efficient, cool-eyed, low of voice. There were medicine-closets with orderly rows of labelled bottles, linen-rooms with great stacks of sheets and towels, long vistas of shining floors and lines of beds. There were brisk house surgeons with duck clothes and brass buttons, who eyed her with friendly, patronising glances. There were bandages and dressings, and great white screens behind which were played little or big dramas, births or deaths, as the case might be. And over all brooded the mysterious authority of the superintendent of the training-school, dubbed the Head, for short.

Twelve hours a day, from seven to seven, with the off duty intermission, Sidney laboured at tasks which revolted her soul. She swept and dusted the wards, cleaned closets, folded sheets and towels, rolled bandages—did everything but nurse the sick, which was what she had come to do.

At night she did not go home. She sat on the edge of her narrow white bed and soaked her aching feet in hot water and witch hazel, and practised taking pulses on her own slender wrist, with K.'s little watch.

Out of all the long, hot days, two periods stood out clearly, to be waited for and cherished. One was when, early in the afternoon, with the ward in spotless order, the shades drawn against the August sun, the tables covered with their red covers, and the only sound the drone of the bandage-machine as Sidney steadily turned it, Dr. Max passed the door on his way to the surgical ward beyond, and gave her a cheery greeting. At these times Sidney's heart beat almost in time with the ticking of the little watch.

The other hour was at twilight, when, work over for the day, the night nurse, with her rubber-soled shoes and tired eyes and

jangling keys, having reported and received the night orders, the nurses gathered in their small parlour for prayers. It was months before Sidney got over the exaltation of that twilight hour, and never did it cease to bring her healing and peace. In a way, it crystallised for her what the day's work meant: charity and its sister, service, the promise of rest and peace. Into the little parlour filed the nurses, and knelt, folding their tired hands.

"The Lord is my shepherd," read the Head out of her worn Bible; "I shall not want."

And the nurses: "'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.'"

And so on through the psalm to the assurance at the end, 'And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

Now and then there was a death behind one of the white screens. It caused little change in the routine of the ward. A nurse stayed behind the screen, and her work was done by the others. When everything was over, the time was noted exactly on the record, and the body was taken away.

At first it seemed to Sidney that she could not stand this nearness to death. She thought the nurses hard because they took it quietly. Then she found that it was only stoicism, resignation, that they had learned. These things must be, and the work must go on. Their philosophy made them no less tender. Some such patient detachment must be that of the angels who keep the Great Record.

On her first Sunday half-holiday she was free in the morning, and went to church with her mother, going back to the hospital after the service. So it was two weeks before she saw Le Moyne again. Even then, it was only for a short time. Christine and Palmer Howe came in to see her, and to inspect the balcony, now finished.

But Sidney and Le Moyne had a few words together first.

There was a change in Sidney. Le Moyne was quick to see it. She was a trifle subdued, with a puzzled look in her blue eyes. Her mouth was tender, as always, but he thought it drooped. There was a new atmosphere of wistfulness about the girl that made his heart ache.

They were alone in the little parlour with its brown lamp and blue silk shade, and its small nude Eve—which Anna kept because it had been a gift from her husband, but retired behind a photograph of the minister, so that only the head and a bare arm holding the apple appeared above the reverend gentleman.

K. never smoked in the parlour, but by sheer force of habit he held the pipe in his teeth.

'And how have things been going?' asked Sidney practically.

'Your steward has little to report. Aunt Harriet, who left you her love, has had the complete order for the Lorenz trousseau. She and I have picked out a stunning design for the wedding dress. I thought I'd ask you about the veil. We're rather in a quandary. Do you like this new fashion of draping the veil from behind the coiffure in the back——'

Sidney had been sitting on the edge of her chair, staring.

'There,' she said—'I knew it! This house is fatal! They're making an old woman of you already.' Her tone was tragic.

'Miss Lorenz likes the new method, but my personal preference is for the old way, with the bride's face covered.'

He sucked calmly at his dead pipe.

'Katie has a new prescription—recipe—for bread. It has more bread and fewer air-holes. One cake of yeast——'

Sidney sprang to her feet.

'It's perfectly terrible!' she cried. 'Because you rent a room in this house is no reason why you should give up your personality and your—your intelligence. Not but that it's good for you. But Katie has made bread without masculine assistance for a good many years, and if Christine can't decide about her own veil she'd better not get married. Mother says you water the flowers every evening, and lock up the house before you go to bed. I—I never meant you to adopt the family!'

K. removed his pipe and gazed earnestly into the bowl.

'Bill Taft has had kittens under the porch,' he said. 'And the groceryman has been sending short weight. We've bought scales now, and weigh everything.'

'You are evading the question.'

'Dear child, I am doing these things because I like to do them. For—for some time I've been floating, and now I've got a home. Every time I lock up the windows at night, or cut a picture out of a magazine as a suggestion to your Aunt Harriet, it's an anchor to windward.'

Sidney gazed helplessly at his imperturbable face. He seemed older than she had recalled him; the hair over his ears was almost white. And yet he was just thirty. That was Palmer Howe's age, and Palmer seemed like a boy. But he held himself more erect

than he had in the first days of his occupancy of the second-floor front.

'And now,' he said cheerfully, 'what about yourself? You've lost a lot of illusions, of course, but perhaps you've gained ideals. That's a step.'

'Life,' observed Sidney, with the wisdom of two weeks out in the world, 'life is a terrible thing, K. We think we've got it, and—it's got us.'

'Undoubtedly.'

'When I think of how simple I used to think it all was! One grew up and got married, and—and perhaps had children. And when one got very old one died. Lately I've been seeing that life really consists of exceptions—children who don't grow up, and grown-ups who die before they are old. And '—this took an effort, but she looked at him squarely—'and people who have children, but are not married. It all rather hurts.'

'All knowledge that is worth while hurts in the getting.'

Sidney got up and wandered around the room, touching its little familiar objects with tender hands. K. watched her. There was this curious element in his love for her, that when he was with her it took on the guise of friendship and deceived even himself. It was only in the lonely hours that it took on truth, became a hopeless yearning for the touch of her hand or a glance from her clear eyes.

Sidney, having picked up the minister's picture, replaced it absently, so that Eve stood revealed in all her pre-apple innocence.

'There is something else,' she said absently. 'I cannot talk it over with mother. There is a girl in the ward—'

'A patient?'

'Yes. She is quite pretty. She has had typhoid, but she is a little better. She's—not a good person.'

'I see.'

'At first I couldn't bear to go near her. I shivered when I had to straighten her bed. I—I'm being very frank, but I've got to talk this out with someone. I worried a lot about it, because, although at first I hated her, now I don't. I rather like her.'

She looked at K. defiantly, but there was no disapproval in his eyes.

'Yes.'

'Well, this is the question. She's getting better. She'll be

able to go out soon. Don't you think something ought to be done to keep her from—going back ?'

There was a shadow in K.'s eyes now. She was so young to face all this ; and yet, since face it she must, how much better to have her do it squarely.

'Does she want to change her mode of life ?'

'I don't know, of course. There are some things one doesn't discuss. She cares a great deal for some man. The other day I propped her up in bed and gave her a newspaper, and after a while I found the paper on the floor, and she was crying. The other patients avoid her, and it was some time before I noticed it. The next day she told me that the man was going to marry someone else. "He wouldn't marry me, of course," she said ; "but he might have told me."'

Le Moyne did his best, that afternoon in the little parlour, to provide Sidney with a philosophy to carry her through her training. He told her that certain responsibilities were hers, but that she could not reform the world. Broad charity, tenderness, and healing were her province.

'Help them all you can,' he finished, feeling inadequate and hopelessly didactic. 'Cure them ; send them out with a smile ; and—leave the rest to the Almighty.'

Sidney was resigned, but not content. Newly facing the evil of the world, she was a rampant reformer at once. Only the arrival of Christine and her *fiancé* saved his philosophy from complete rout. He had time for a question between the ring of the bell and Katie's deliberate progress from the kitchen to the front door.

'How about the surgeon, young Wilson ? Do you ever see him ?' His tone was carefully casual.

'Almost every day. He stops at the door of the ward and speaks to me. It makes me quite distinguished, for a probationer. Usually, you know, the staff never even see the probationers.'

'And—the glamour persists ?' He smiled down at her.

'I think he is very wonderful,' said Sidney valiantly.

Christine Lorenz, while not large, seemed to fill the little room. Her voice, which was frequent and penetrating, her smile, which was wide and showed very white teeth that were a trifle large for beauty, her all-embracing good nature, dominated the entire lower floor. K., who had met her before, retired into silence and a corner. Young Howe smoked a cigarette in the hall.

'You poor thing!' said Christine, and put her cheek against Sidney's. 'Why, you're positively thin! Palmer gives you a month to tire of it all; but I said——'

'I take that back,' Palmer spoke indolently from the corridor. 'There is the look of willing martyrdom in her face. Where is Reginald? I've brought some nuts for him.'

'Reginald is back in the woods again.'

'Now, look here,' he said solemnly. 'When we arranged about these rooms, there were certain properties that went with them—the lady next door who plays Paderewski's "Minuet" six hours a day, and K. here, and Reginald. If you must take something to the woods, why not the minuet person?'

Howe was a good-looking man, thin, smooth-shaven, aggressively well dressed. This Sunday afternoon, in a cut-away coat and high hat, with an English malacca cane, he was just a little out of the picture. The Street said that he was 'wild,' and that to get into the Country Club set Christine was losing more than she was gaining.

Christine had stepped out on the balcony, and was speaking to K. just inside.

'It's rather a queer way to live, of course,' she said. 'But Palmer is a pauper, practically. We are going to take our meals at home for a while. You see, certain things that we want we can't have if we take a house—a car, for instance. We'll need one for running out to the Country Club to dinner. Of course, unless father gives me one for a wedding present, it will be a cheap one. And we're getting the Rosenfeld boy to drive it. He's crazy about machinery, and he'll come for practically nothing.'

K. had never known a married couple to take two rooms and go to the bride's mother's for meals in order to keep a car. He looked faintly dazed. Also, certain sophistries of his former world about a cheap chauffeur being costly in the end rose in his mind and were carefully suppressed.

'You'll find a car a great comfort, I'm sure,' he said politely.

Christine considered K. rather distinguished. She liked his greying hair and steady eyes, and insisted on considering his shabbiness a pose. She was conscious that she made a pretty picture in the French window, and preened herself like a bright bird.

'You'll come out with us now and then, I hope.'

'Thank you.'

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'Isn't it odd to think that we are going to be practically one family!'

'Odd, but very pleasant.'

He caught the flash of Christine's smile, and smiled back. Christine was glad she had decided to take the rooms, glad that K. lived there. This theory of marriage being the end of all things was absurd. A married woman should have men friends; they kept her up. She would take him to the Country Club. The women would be mad to know him. How clear-cut his profile was!

Across the Street, the Rosenfeld boy had stopped by Dr. Wilson's car, and was eyeing it with the cool, appraising glance of the street boy whose sole knowledge of machinery has been acquired from the clothes-washer at home. Joe Drummond, eyes carefully ahead, went up the street. Tillie, at Mrs. McKee's, stood in the doorway and fanned herself with her apron. Max Wilson came out of the house and got into his car. For a minute, perhaps, all the actors, save Carlotta and Dr. Ed, were on the stage. It was that *bête noire* of the playwright, an ensemble: K. Le Moyne and Sidney, Palmer Howe, Christine, Tillie, the younger Wilson, Joe, even young Rosenfeld, all within speaking distance, almost touching distance, gathered within and about the little house on a side street which K. at first grimly and now tenderly called 'home.'

CHAPTER X.

THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY.

ON Monday morning, shortly after the McKee prolonged breakfast hour was over, a small man of perhaps fifty, with iron-grey hair and a sparse goatee, made his way along the Street. He moved with the air of one having a definite destination but a by no means definite reception.

As he walked along he eyed with a professional glance the ailanthus and maple trees which, with an occasional poplar, lined the Street. At the door of Mrs. McKee's boarding-house he stopped. Owing to a slight change in the grade of the street, the McKee house had no stoop, but one flat door-step. Thus it was possible to ring the door-bell from the pavement, and this the stranger did. It gave him a curious appearance of being ready to cut and run if things were unfavourable.

For a moment things were indeed unfavourable. Mrs. McKee

herself opened the door. She recognised him at once, but no smile met the nervous one that formed itself on the stranger's face.

'Oh, it's you, is it?'

'It's me, Mrs. McKee.'

'Well?'

He made a conciliatory effort.

'I was thinking, as I came along,' he said, 'that you and the neighbours had better get after these here caterpillars. Look at them maples, now.'

'If you want to see Tillie, she's busy.'

'I only want to say how-d'ye-do. I'm just on my way through town.'

'I'll say it for you.'

A certain doggedness took the place of his tentative smile.

'I'll say it myself, I guess. I don't want any unpleasantness, but I've come a good way to see her, and I'll hang around until I do.'

Mrs. McKee knew herself routed, and retreated to the kitchen.

'You're wanted out front,' she said.

'Who is it?'

'Never mind. Only, my advice to you is, don't be a fool.'

Tillie went suddenly pale. The hands with which she tied a white apron over her gingham one were shaking.

Her visitor had accepted the open door as permission to enter and was standing in the hall.

He went rather white himself when he saw Tillie coming toward him down the hall. He knew that for Tillie this visit would mean that he was free—and he was not free. Sheer terror of his errand filled him.

'Well, here I am, Tillie.'

'All dressed up and highly perfumed!' said poor Tillie, with the question in her eyes. 'You're quite a stranger, Mr. Schwitter.'

'I was passing through, and I just thought I'd call around and tell you— My God, Tillie, I'm glad to see you!'

She made no reply, but opened the door into the cool and shaded little parlour. He followed her in and closed the door behind him.

'I couldn't help it. I know I promised.'

'Then she——?'

'She's still living. Playing with paper dolls—that's the latest.'

Tillie sat down suddenly on one of the stiff chairs. Her lips were as white as her face.

'I thought, when I saw you——'

'I was afraid you'd think that.'

Neither spoke for a moment. Tillie's hands twisted nervously in her lap. Mr. Schwitter's eyes were fixed on the window, which looked back on the McKee yard.

'That spiræa back there's not looking very well. If you'll save the cigar ends around here and put 'em in water, and spray it, you'll kill the lice.'

Tillie found speech at last.

'I don't know why you come around bothering me,' she said dully. 'I've been getting along all right; now you come and upset everything.'

Mr. Schwitter rose and took a step toward her.

'Well, I'll tell you why I came. Look at me. I ain't getting any younger, am I? Time's going on, and I'm wanting you all the time. And what am I getting? What've I got out of life, anyhow? I'm lonely, Tillie!'

'What's that got to do with me?'

'You're lonely too, ain't you?'

'Me? I haven't got time to be. And, anyhow, there's always a crowd here.'

'You can be lonely in a crowd, and I guess—is there anyone around here you like better than me?'

'Oh, what's the use!' cried poor Tillie. 'We can talk our heads off and not get anywhere. You've got a wife living, and, unless you intend to do away with her, I guess that's all there is to it.'

'Is that all, Tillie? Haven't you got a right to be happy?'

She was quick of wit, and she read his tone as well as his words.

'You get out of here—and get out quick!'

She had jumped to her feet; but he only looked at her with understanding eyes.

'I know,' he said. 'That's the way I thought of it at first. Maybe I've just got used to the idea, but it doesn't seem so bad to me now. Here are you, drudging for other people when you

ought to have a place all your own—and not gettin' younger any more than I am. Here's both of us lonely. I'd be a good husband to you, Till—because, whatever it'd be in law, I'd be your husband before God.'

Tillie cowered against the door, her eyes on his. Here before her, embodied in this man, stood all that she had wanted and never had. He meant a home, tenderness, children perhaps. He turned away from the look in her eyes and stared out of the front window.

'Them poplars out there ought to be taken away,' he said heavily. 'They're hell on sewers.'

Tillie found her voice at last :

'I couldn't do it, Mr. Schwitter. I guess I'm a coward. Maybe I'll be sorry.'

'Perhaps, if you got used to the idea——'

'What's that to do with the right and wrong of it?'

'Maybe I'm queer. It don't seem like wrong-doing to me. It seems to me that the Lord would make an exception of us if He knew the circumstances. Perhaps, after you get used to the idea——. What I thought was like this. I've got a little farm about seven miles from the city limits, and the tenant on it says that nearly every Sunday somebody motors out from town and wants a chicken-and-waffle supper. There ain't much in the nursery business any more. These landscape fellows buy their stuff direct, and the middleman's out. I've got a good orchard, and there's a spring, so I could put running water in the house. I'd be good to you, Tillie—I swear it. It'd be just the same as marriage. Nobody need know it.'

'You'd know it. You wouldn't respect me.'

'Don't a man respect a woman that's got courage enough to give up everything for him?'

Tillie was crying softly into her apron. He put a work-hardened hand on her head.

'It isn't as if I'd run around after women,' he said. 'You're only one, since Maggie——' He drew a long breath. 'I'll give you time to think it over. Suppose I step in to-morrow morning. It doesn't commit you to anything to talk it over.'

There had been no passion in the interview, and there was none in the touch of his hand. He was not young, and the tragic loneliness of approaching old age confronted him. He was trying to

solve his problem and Tillie's, and what he had found was no solution, but a compromise.

'To-morrow morning then,' he said quietly, and went out at the door.

All that hot August morning Tillie worked in a daze. Mrs. McKee watched her and said nothing. She interpreted the girl's white face and set lips as the result of having had to dismiss Schwitter again, and looked for time to bring peace, as it had done before.

Le Moyne came late to his midday meal. For once, the mental anaesthesia of endless figures had failed him. On his way home he had drawn his small savings from the bank, and mailed them, in cash and registered, to a back street in the slums of a distant city. He had done this before, and always with a feeling of exultation, as if, for a time at least, the burden he carried was lightened. But to-day he experienced no compensatory relief. Life was dull and stale to him, effort ineffectual. At thirty a man should look back with tenderness, forward with hope. K. Le Moyne dared not look back, and had no desire to look ahead into empty years.

Although he ate little, the dining-room was empty when he finished. Usually he had some cheerful banter for Tillie, to which she responded in kind. But, what with the heat and with heaviness of spirit, he did not notice her depression until he rose.

'Why, you're not sick, are you, Tillie?'

'Me? Oh, no. Low in my mind, I guess.'

'It's the heat. It's fearful. Look here. If I send you two tickets to a roof garden where there's a variety show, can't you take a friend and go to-night?'

'Thanks; I guess I'll not go out.'

Then, unexpectedly, she bent her head against a chair-back and fell to silent crying. K. let her cry for a moment. Then:

'Now—tell me about it.'

'I'm just worried; that's all.'

'Let's see if we can't fix up the worries. Come, now, out with them!'

'I'm a wicked woman, Mr. Le Moyne.'

'Then I'm the person to tell it to. I—I'm pretty much of a lost soul myself.'

He put an arm over her shoulders and drew her up, facing him.

'Suppose we go into the parlour and talk it out. I'll bet things are not as bad as you imagine.'

But when, in the parlour that had seen Mr. Schwitter's strange proposal of the morning, Tillie poured out her story, K.'s face grew grave.

'The wicked part is that I want to go with him,' she finished. 'I keep thinking about being out in the country, and him coming in to supper, and everything nice for him, and me cleaned up and waiting—— O my God! I've always been a good woman until now.'

'I—I understand a great deal better than you think I do. You're not wicked. The only thing is——'

'Go on. Hit me with it.'

'You might go on and be very happy. And as for the—for his wife, it won't do her any harm. It's only—if there are children.'

'I know. I've thought of that. But I'm so crazy for children!'

'Exactly. So you should be. But when they come, and you cannot give them a name—don't you see? I'm not preaching morality. God forbid that I——. But no happiness is built on a foundation of wrong. It's been tried before, Tillie, and it doesn't pan out.'

He was conscious of a feeling of failure when he left her at last. She had acquiesced in what he said, knew he was right, and even promised to talk to him again before making a decision one way or the other. But against his abstractions of conduct and morality there was pleading in Tillie the hungry mother-heart; law and creed and early training were fighting against the strongest instinct of the race. It was a losing battle.

CHAPTER XI.

BREATH OF LIFE.

THE hot August days dragged on. Merciless sunlight beat in through the slatted shutters of ward windows. At night, from the roof to which the nurses retired after prayers for a breath of air, lower surrounding roofs were seen to be covered with sleepers. Children dozed precariously on the edge of eternity; men and women sprawled in the grotesque postures of sleep.

There was a sort of feverish irritability in the air. Even the nurses, stoically unmindful of bodily discomfort, spoke curtly or not at all. Miss Dana, in Sidney's ward, went down with a low

fever, and for a day or so Sidney and Miss Grange got along as best they could. Sidney worked like two or more, performed marvels of bed-making, learned to give alcohol baths for fever with the maximum of result and the minimum of time, even made rounds with a member of the staff and came through creditably.

Dr. Ed Wilson had sent a woman patient into the ward, and his visits were the breath of life to the girl.

'How're they treating you?' he asked her, one day, abruptly.

'Very well.'

'Look at me squarely. You're pretty and you're young. Some of them will try to take it out of you. That's human nature. Has anyone tried it yet?'

Sidney looked distressed.

'Positively, no. It's been hot, and of course it's troublesome to tell me everything. I—I think they're all very kind.'

He reached out a square, competent hand, and put it over hers.

'We miss you in the Street,' he said. 'It's all sort of dead there since you left. Joe Drummond doesn't moon up and down any more, for one thing. What was wrong between you and Joe, Sidney?'

'I didn't want to marry him; that's all.'

'That's considerable. The boy's taking it hard.'

Then, seeing her face:

'But you're right, of course. Don't marry anyone unless you can't live without him. That's been my motto, and here I am, still single.'

He went out and down the corridor. He had known Sidney all her life. During the lonely times when Max was at college and in Europe, he had watched her grow from a child to a young girl. He did not suspect for a moment that in that secret heart of hers he sat newly enthroned, in a glow of white light, as Max's brother; that the mere thought that he lived in Max's house (it was, of course, Max's house to her), sat at Max's breakfast-table, could see him whenever he wished, made the touch of his hand on hers a benediction and a caress.

Sidney finished folding linen and went back to the ward. It was Friday and a visiting day. Almost every bed had its visitor beside it; but Sidney, running an eye over the ward, found the girl of whom she had spoken to Le Moyne quite alone. She was

propped up in bed, reading; but at each new step in the corridor hope would spring into her eyes and die again.

'Want anything, Grace?'

'Me? I'm all right. If these people would only get out and let me read in peace——. Say, sit down and talk to me, won't you? It beats the mischief the way your friends forget you when you're laid up in a place like this.'

'People can't always come at visiting hours. Besides, it's hot.'

'A girl I knew was sick here last year, and it wasn't too hot for me to trot in twice a week with a bunch of flowers for her. Do you think she's been here once? She hasn't.'

Then, suddenly:

'You know that man I told you about the other day?'

Sidney nodded. The girl's anxious eyes were on her.

'It was a shock to me, that's all. I didn't want you to think I'd break my heart over any fellow. All I meant was, I wished he'd let me know.'

Her eyes searched Sidney's. They looked unnaturally large and sombre in her face. Her hair had been cut short, and her night-gown, open at the neck, showed her thin throat and prominent clavicles.

'You're from the city, aren't you, Miss Page?'

'Yes.'

'You told me the street, but I've forgotten it.'

Sidney repeated the name of the street, and slipped a fresh pillow under the girl's head.

'The evening paper says there's a girl going to be married on your street.'

'Really! Oh, I think I know. A friend of mine is going to be married. Was the name Lorenz?'

'The girl's name was Lorenz. I—I don't remember the man's name.'

'She is going to marry a Mr. Howe,' said Sidney briskly. 'Now how do you feel? More comfy?'

'Fine! I suppose you'll be going to that wedding?'

'If I ever get time to have a dress made, I'll surely go.'

Toward six o'clock the next morning, the night nurse was making out her reports. On one record, which said at the top, 'Grace Irving, age 19,' and an address which, to the initiated, told all her story, the night nurse wrote:

'Did not sleep at all during night. Face set and eyes staring, but complains of no pain. Refused milk at eleven and three.'

Carlotta Harrison, back from her vacation, reported for duty the next morning, and was assigned to E ward, which was Sidney's. She gave Sidney a curt little nod, and proceeded to change the entire routine with the thoroughness of a Central American revolutionary president. Sidney, who had yet to learn that with some people authority can only assert itself by change, found herself confused, at sea, half resentful.

Once she ventured a protest:

'I've been taught to do it that way, Miss Harrison. If my method is wrong, show me what you want, and I'll do my best.'

'I am not responsible for what you have been taught. And you will not speak back when you are spoken to.'

Small as the incident was, it marked a change in Sidney's position in the ward. She got the worst off-duty of the day, or none. Small humiliations were hers: late meals, disagreeable duties, endless and often unnecessary tasks. Even Miss Grange, now reduced to second place, remonstrated with her senior.

'I think a certain amount of severity is good for a probationer,' she said, 'but you are brutal, Miss Harrison.'

'She's stupid.'

'She's not at all stupid. She's going to be one of the best nurses in the house.'

'Report me, then. Tell the Head I'm abusing Dr. Wilson's pet probationer, that I don't always say "please" when I ask her to change a bed or take a temperature.'

Miss Grange was not lacking in keenness. She did not go to the Head, which is unethical under any circumstances; but gradually there spread through the training school a story that Carlotta Harrison was jealous of the new Page girl, Dr. Wilson's *protégée*. Things were still highly unpleasant in the ward, but they grew much better when Sidney was off duty. She was asked to join a small class that was studying French at night. As ignorant of the cause of her popularity as of the reason of her persecution, she went steadily on her way.

And she was gaining every day. Her mind was forming. She was learning to think for herself. For the first time, she was facing problems and demanding an answer. Why must there be Grace Irvings in the world? Why must the healthy babies of the obstetric

ward go out to the slums and come back, in months or years, crippled for the great fight by the handicap of their environment, rickety, tuberculous, twisted? Why need the huge mills feed the hospitals daily with injured men?

And there were other things that she thought of. Every night, on her knees in the nurses' parlour at prayers, she promised, if she were accepted as a nurse, to try never to become callous, never to regard her patients as 'cases,' never to allow the cleanliness and routine of her ward to delay a cup of water to the thirsty, or her arms to a sick child.

On the whole, the world was good, she found. And, of all the good things in it, the best was service. True, there were hot days and restless nights, weary feet, and now and then a heartache. There was Miss Harrison, too. But to offset these there was the sound of Dr. Max's step in the corridor, and his smiling nod from the door; there was a 'God bless you' now and then for the comfort she gave; there were wonderful nights on the roof under the stars, until K.'s little watch warned her to bed.

While Sidney watched the stars from her hospital roof, while all around her the slum children, on other roofs, fought for the very breath of life, others who knew and loved her watched the stars too. K. was having his own troubles in those days. Late at night, when Anna and Harriet had retired, he sat on the balcony and thought of many things. Anna Page was not well. He had noticed that her lips were rather blue, and had called in Dr. Ed. It was valvular heart disease. Anna was not to be told, nor Sidney. It was Harriet's ruling.

'Sidney can't help,' said Harriet, 'and for heaven's sake let her have her chance. Anna may live for years. You know her as well as I do. If you tell her anything at all, she'll have Sidney here, waiting on her hand and foot.'

And Le Moyne, fearful of urging too much because his own heart was crying out to have the girl back, assented.

Then, K. was anxious about Joe. The boy did not seem to get over the thing the way he should. Now and then Le Moyne, resuming his old habit of wearying himself into sleep, would walk out into the country. On one such night he had overtaken Joe, tramping along with his head down.

Joe had not wanted his company, had plainly sulked. But Le Moyne had persisted.

'I'll not talk,' he said ; ' but, since we're going the same way, we might as well walk together.'

But after a time Joe had talked, after all. It was not much at first—a feverish complaint about the heat, and that if there was trouble in Mexico he thought he'd go.

'Wait until fall, if you're thinking of it,' K. advised. 'This is tepid compared with what you'll get down there.'

'I've got to get away from here.'

K. nodded understandingly. Since the scene at the White Springs Hotel, both knew that no explanation was necessary.

'It isn't so much that I mind her turning me down,' Joe said, after a silence. 'A girl can't marry all the men who want her. But I don't like this hospital idea. I don't understand it. She didn't have to go. Sometimes'—he turned bloodshot eyes on Le Moyne—'I think she went because she was crazy about somebody there.'

'She went because she wanted to be useful.'

'She could be useful at home.'

For almost twenty minutes they tramped on without speech. They had made a circle, and the lights of the city were close again. K. stopped and put a kindly hand on Joe's shoulder.

'A man's got to stand up under a thing like this, you know. I mean it mustn't be a knockout. Keeping busy is a darned good method.'

Joe shook himself free, but without resentment.

'I'll tell you what's eating me up,' he exploded. 'It's Max Wilson. Don't talk to me about her going to the hospital to be useful. She's crazy about him, and he's as crooked as a dog's hind leg.'

'Perhaps. But it's always up to the girl. You know that.'

He felt immeasurably old beside Joe's boyish blustering—old and rather helpless.

'I'm watching him. Some of these days I'll get something on him. Then she'll know what to think of her hero !'

'That's not quite square, is it ?'

'He's not square.'

Joe had left him then, wheeling abruptly off into the shadows. K. had gone home alone, rather uneasy. There seemed to be mischief in the very air.

(To be continued.)

LORD BRAMPTON AND HIS CRITICS.

To the Editor of the 'CORNHILL MAGAZINE.'

SIR,—In the April number of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE there appears an article on the 'Penge Mystery' by Sir Edward Clarke. It contains a very strongly worded attack on the late Sir Henry Hawkins (Lord Brampton). This attack is, indeed, the most prominent feature of the article.

Not content with most severe criticism—I might more properly say denunciation—of Sir Henry Hawkins' conduct in that particular case, Sir Edward Clarke says that he was the 'worst Judge I ever knew or heard of.' . . . 'He had no notion whatever of what justice meant or of the obligations of truth and fairness.' He speaks of him as continuing—after the Penge case—his career of 'public disservice'; and he tells us that he himself, on the occasion of Sir Henry's retirement from the Bench, wrote to the Attorney-General, intimating that he would make a public protest in the event of the Judge's taking a public farewell of the Bar and being made the subject of the official eulogy usual in such circumstances. Sir Henry did not take a public farewell—he only met his friends in Middle Temple Hall. And so—Sir Edward's public protest never came off.

But had Sir Edward no other opportunity of making his protest—during Sir Henry's lifetime? Sir Henry sat on the Bench from 1876 to 1898. From 1880 to 1900 Sir Edward was (with, I think, only one brief interval) a prominent and influential Member of Parliament. From 1886 to 1892 he was Solicitor-General. There is a constitutional course open to—and, I should submit, incumbent on—a Member of Parliament who holds that a Judge's career is one of public disservice. Did Sir Edward take it?

Further—on Sir Henry's retirement, he was informed by Lord Salisbury that Her Majesty had been pleased to confer a peerage on him 'on the occasion of your retirement from the Judicial Bench, which you have so greatly adorned.'

Was there not here an opportunity for Sir Edward's public protest? Did he make it?

I have always had a great respect for Sir Edward Clarke, and if he says that he had good reasons for not saying in Sir Henry Hawkins' lifetime what he now says after his death, I shall accept his statement. Nor is it my purpose to enter into controversy with him, or to

presume to set my opinion against his. Men in public positions must submit to criticism, both during their lives and after their deaths. Lord Brampton was far from perfection—as most of us are. In his complex, interesting, and very individual character there were some serious faults and some odd foibles; among the latter was the perverse, but not wholly unattractive one, of exaggerating his own faults and foibles, of showing them off and liking to shock Puritans with them. In spite of these things I could, from a very close and intimate knowledge of his work as a Judge in criminal cases, say something in his defence against Sir Edward Clarke's sweeping indictment. According to my observation he was a conscientious, a wise, and a compassionate Judge.

Sir Edward will attach no value to my testimony. Rightly, perhaps; I was Sir Henry's kinsman; I was young; I am no authority. But may I cite two or three witnesses, whose evidence may be allowed to weigh against Sir Edward Clarke's denunciation? My quotations are from letters written to Sir Henry on his aforesaid retirement:—

Sir A. L. Smith, Master of the Rolls, wrote:—‘I cannot tell you how sorry I am to think that you have left us; it is an enormous loss to us Judges, for there are very few left now to train up the young ones in the way they should go.’

Sir Herbert Stephen wrote:—‘You have certainly done all that could be done to set an example of how prisoners ought to be tried, which as long as I hold my present office I cannot help regarding as the most essentially important part of the duties of a Judge.’

Lord Justice Mathew wrote:—‘It will always be a pleasure to me to remember the help you have given in securing a merciful administration of the criminal law, and in showing that the interests of the community may be adequately protected without forgetting the poor devil in the dock.’

These men, whose judgment is, beyond all question, authoritative, had no reason to write at all unless they wished to express an honest opinion.

That opinion I pray in aid against Sir Edward Clarke's denunciation of a remarkable man who is no longer able to defend himself. I cannot help wishing that Sir Edward's sense of duty had compelled him to speak while the culprit was still alive to answer.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

ANTHONY H. HAWKINS.

To the Editor of the 'CORNHILL MAGAZINE.'

SIR,—I will not ask you for much space for my reply to the very courteous letter of Mr. Anthony H. Hawkins. He says that it is not his purpose to enter into controversy with me, and I see no reason for further argument on my part. In the article which has attracted so much attention I not only expressed the opinion of Sir Henry Hawkins which I had formed during many years' experience of his conduct as a Judge, but I referred in detail to his behaviour during one notable case, and I mentioned three other cases as justifying my censure, and referred to his own autobiography as supporting it. Nothing that I have heard or read since the article appeared has made me think that my estimate was mistaken, or my language too strong. They have been endorsed by the practically unanimous opinion of those whose experience made them best qualified to judge. I content myself with quoting a sentence from the most important of legal publications. The 'Law Journal' says: 'The profession will, we imagine, agree in the main with Sir Edward Clarke's estimate of his qualities as a Judge.'

Mr. Hawkins asks two questions which I can readily answer. The first is why I did not bring forward a motion in the House of Commons for an address to the Crown praying that Sir Henry Hawkins might be removed from his office. If such an address had been passed by both Houses of Parliament the Sovereign might have removed him. I think Mr. Hawkins will see upon reflection that such a course would have been quite impracticable. It would have involved a judicial investigation, not of a single act of alleged wrongdoing, but into a course of conduct every incident in which would have required detailed examination and would have been vigorously defended by those who had profited by the Judge's misconduct.

For such an investigation the House of Commons, overpressed with work, and perturbed by party influences, is wholly unfit. It could not make the investigation itself; no Select Committee could do so effectively, and no Minister would consent to the appointment of such a Committee.

The 'constitutional course' of which Mr. Hawkins speaks is only applicable to some specific and clearly established act of corruption, or to notorious physical or mental incapacity.

Mr. Hawkins also asks why I did not make a public protest when it was announced that Her Majesty had conferred a peerage upon Sir Henry upon his retirement. To have done so would have been to attack, not the new peer, but the Sovereign who had bestowed the peerage, and the Prime Minister who had advised the grant.

Clearly no good result could have followed from any such attack.

It appeared to me probable that an opportunity of protest would be offered by the public leave-taking of the Judge, and I at once gave notice to the Attorney-General that I should make it.

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

EDWARD CLARKE.

Peterhouse, Staines.

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Its contents may be grouped under four heads :—

I. The section devoted to graver topics, such as Foreign Affairs, Politics, Philosophy, Sociology, Imperial Questions, and the more important forms of criticism. In this group special attention is given to European matters, which are dealt with by both English and Foreign writers. In particular, M. Paul Parsy, the French correspondent of the *Review*, contributes from time to time a paper on the condition of France and her relation to her neighbours.

II. The section devoted to lighter articles, which contains *belles lettres* and literary or historical essays ; criticisms on Art, Music, and the Drama ; nature articles, short stories, and sketches. The object of the *Review* is to select only those contributions which are entertaining, attractive, or amusing without ceasing to merit the name of literature.

III. The Poetry section, where an attempt is made to collect verse which is strong but not crude, and dainty without being trivial.

IV. There is also a section containing surveys of recent literature. These are written by men of authority on their own subject, who select for treatment only those books which seem to them fitted for a permanent place in the library. Two of these reviews will appear each month, grouping books according to their subjects, such as Philosophy, Art, *Belles Lettres*, and Fiction, Poetry, etc.

A notable feature is the series of supplements reproducing in facsimile unpublished works by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Velasquez, J. M. W. Turner, David Cox, and other Old Masters.

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Some Press Opinions of the

Cornhill Magazine

for May.

MORNING POST.—'Many readers of the "Cornhill" will be attracted by a number of letters—seventeen in all—hitherto unpublished, which passed between Carlyle and Robert Browning between the years 1847 and 1879. Mr. H. Warner Allen writes on the operations in Lorraine—attractively and with a keen appreciation of the great value of the work of the French soldiers there.'

SOUTH AFRICA.—"Cornhill" is specially good this month. It is worth buying if only for a set of hitherto unpublished correspondence between Browning and Carlyle. This Magazine is to be felicitated on the many opportunities it has of specialising in Browning literature. These letters are a precious possession to the admirers of either the historian or the poet.'

OXFORD CHRONICLE.—"The "Cornhill" is remarkably successful in at once maintaining its old features and keeping in touch with the absorbing questions of the hour. A quiet unemotional paper, "A Rhodes Scholar in Belgium," by Mr. F. H. Gailor, deserves careful reading because it brings home to us what it means to be living in a land under the iron heel of the German Army . . . the things which Mr. Gailor sets forth are sufficiently startling. The first chapters of a new novel by Mrs. Humphry Ward show all her old power of capturing instantly the reader's interest.'

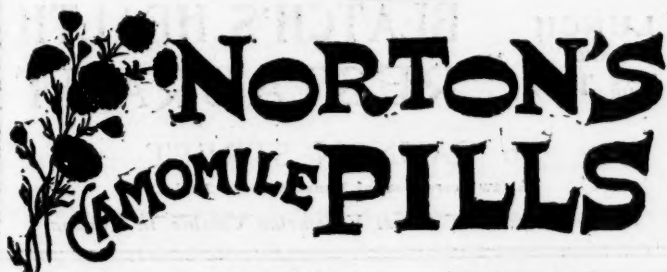
NOTES AND QUERIES.—"Three articles are of more than temporary interest. The first of these is Mr. H. W. Allen's "In French Lorraine" . . . few of the descriptions of the French conduct of the war come up to this one in its vividness and wealth of incident. The second is "A Rhodes Scholar in Belgium," which gives a valuable and detailed sketch of the work of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium. The third article is of an interest more entirely unique . . . a correspondence between Carlyle and Browning not hitherto printed. The letters bear witness to a degree of friendship between the two men considerably more intimate than is generally known. Their intrinsic value is not small.'

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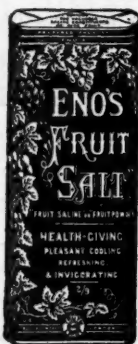
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